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MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE AND MINISTRY

OF

MR. WILLIAM BRAMWELL,

LATELY AN

ITINERANT METHODIST PREACHER:

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS INTERESTING AND EXTENSIVE CORRESPONDENCE.

BY JAMES SIGSTON,
QUEEN-SQUARE ACADEMY, LEEDS.

Third American Edition.

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PREFACE.

I WAS intimately acquainted with the late holy and highly respected WILLIAM BRAMWELL. In the course of the following narrative, it will appear that I had long been honoured with his friendship and correspondence, and that his death occurred only a few minutes after he had left my house. From these and other circumstances, I was induced, at the earnest solicitations of his friends, to undertake the preparation of this Memoir of his Life and Ministry. It is a source of lamentation to me, that I have not been able to present an account of my much esteemed friend, more worthy of his excellences and of the notice of the religious public.

Many causes have conspired to hinder the completion of a good memoir.—When Mr. Bramwell was in the Hull circuit, he destroyed his valuable diary, the contents of which would unquestionably have furnished a rich entertainment to every Christian. With the motives which induced him to commit those excellent manuscripts to the flames, I am not perfectly acquainted. I have been informed by a friend, who conversed with him on the subject, that he said many of the particulars were of so extraordinary a nature, that he thought that they would almost be considered as enthusiastic and visionary; but I have reason to believe, that he saw the impropriety of this act, several years before his death. Some of Mr. Bramwell's friends had promised to contribute a few papers in illustration of this Account of his Life; but in several instances these promises have been unfulfilled, either through forgetfulness, negligence, or the paramount demands

of other engagements. A great disparity of style will be perceptible in different parts of the memoir; as it will be seen that the same excellences are treated by different writers, chiefly in their own words. But by candid readers this diversity will not be regarded as any disparagement to the work; they will rather be pleased to find, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word established respecting the virtues of Mr. Bramwell. All the accounts, however varied in style, unite in correctly representing his love to God, "his yearning pity for mankind," and his intense desire for their salvation. These powerful motives were in constant exercise on his mind, and incited him to the performance of labours innumerable. It is probable that there have been but few Christian ministers since the days of the apostles, who have made greater exertions to bring to the fold of Christ the fallen sons of men, and whose labours have been more signally owned by the great Head of the Church.

But though the destruction of his journal, the unfulfilled promises of several friends, and the difference of style, have rendered this Memoir an irregular kind of composition; yet I trust that every humble follower of our Lord Jesus Christ will be edified and instructed by the living traits of holiness which it exhibits. Some of the anecdotes may, in the view of cool and calculating characters, seem to savour too much of enthusiasm. But this cannot be charged on Mr. Bramwell as a fault; for he has left behind him no written account of any of these transactions, and was seldom known to speak of them, even in the presence of those who had the happiness of enjoying his most intimate friendship. Yet it is not attempted to be denied, that his was the noble enthusiasm of exerting all his powers to give effect to the gracious purposes of God among the perishing sons of Adam.

Without a goodly portion of this noble feeling, no man ever yet excelled in any profession: Why then should it be the subject of blame, only in the profession of religion? Can any man be too zealous in the promotion of the vital interests of godliness? This is impossible.

> On such a theme 'tis impious to be calm:
> Passion is reason; transport, temper here.
>
> YOUNG.

The publication of this work has been retarded on various accounts, and the Christian world have consequently felt greatly disappointed. My own avocations are so numerous that I could not have undertaken to prepare this Memoir for the press, without availing myself of the assistance of some literary friend; and I here return my sincere thanks to Mr. Nichols, (whose talents are well known to the world,) for his kind assistance and advice in various parts of the work. It was a subject of regret to me, that when I contemplated the early completion of the Memoir by the continuance of his aid, I was suddenly deprived of it, at the close of last December, by his removal to London.

And now, if this humble attempt to do justice to the character and labours of this eminently faithful minister of the Gospel, shall excite an earnest wish in his junior brethren to imitate his conduct, or an increased desire in the people for the attainment of that holiness of heart and life which he inculcated and exemplified;—in short, if this volume be made a blessing to any who peruse it, my object in the publication will be gained, and to God alone shall all the glory be ascribed.

JAMES SIGSTON.

Queen-Square Academy, Leeds,
April 21st, 1820.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE success which has attended the sale of the first edition of this Memoir, and the very favourable reception given to it by the religious public, are circumstances which have afforded me real pleasure, and not the less on account of the emolument which will thus accrue to Mrs. Bramwell. In the absence of all pretensions to literary fame from the execution of the work, (my labour having been little more than that of compilation, arrangement, and correction,) it is yet most gratifying to find that the perusal of it has been attended with much spiritual benefit both to saints and sinners: This is the result for which I was most anxious, and I thank God that it has been granted to me.

The supercilious manner in which certain portions of the Memoir have been viewed by a few profane persons has been no serious abatement to this grateful feeling. For, as the preceding preface will show, I had calculated, that so long as "*the carnal mind is enmity against God*," it cannot receive "*the things of the Spirit*," however clearly revealed or accurately expressed. To such persons these subjects "*are foolishness; they cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" J. S.

Leeds, October 4, 1820.

MEMOIR

OF

MR. WILLIAM BRAMWELL.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. Bramwell's birth, parentage, and education—His father's excellent instructions—Anecdote—The moral qualities of his youth—Early indisposition—His antipathy to settling in Liverpool—He is bound apprentice to a currier.

Mr. William Bramwell, the subject of this memoir, was born in February, in the year 1759, at Elswick, (a village nearly ten miles from Preston,) in the parish of Saint Michael, Lancashire. His parents, George and Elizabeth Bramwell, had a family of eleven children, of whom William was the tenth. Mrs. Hargreave, of Westgate Hill, near Birstal, and Mrs. Jones, of Liverpool, are now the only surviving members of this once large and flourishing family. The others have accomplished their warfare, and are gathered to their fathers. When we contemplate the disappearance of whole families, with many of whom the best affections of our hearts have long been associated, may we not join in the exclamation of the man of God,—"*Your fathers,—where are they? And the prophets,—do they live for ever?*"

Mr. Bramwell's parents were warmly attached to the Established Church; and, according to the light which they possessed, educated their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But their religious views were exceedingly circumscribed. Nor were they singular in this respect; for spiritual darkness at that period nearly enveloped this Christian land. The gospel light introduced at the time of the Reformation had dwindled away into obscurity; and "*blind leaders of the blind*" were too frequently the

only guides of the people. Mr. Bramwell's native village, and several other towns in Lancashire, were among the most benighted parts of England. The Roman Catholics then composed, and still form, a considerable part of the population of that county. The members of other denominations therefore assumed not a little consequence from being styled PROTESTANTS. Without possessing greater spiritual light than their Popish neighbours, they considered this name as the test of religion, and the passport to sanctity.

A chapel of ease, called *Cop Chapel*, was the place of worship frequented by Mr. Bramwell's parents. Though it was situated about a mile from their house, yet, whatever might be the state of the weather, they were scrupulously exact in attending the service of the church, with all their family, every sabbath. It was their earnest wish, that their children should be observant of every moral obligation, and attentive to all the duties of life. Beyond this, their ideas of pure religion had never extended. In love with the form of godliness, they were destitute of its power. They did not perceive the necessity of constant divine influence and of spiritual regeneration. A rigid adherence to the ceremonies of the church, was the highest standard of their piety; and none of their children could be guilty of a more grievous offence against them than that of absenting themselves from the church service, or resorting to the meeting house of some other denomination. Mr. Bramwell's father was particularly reserved towards his children. On this account, they were prevented from making him their confident, and could approach him with no other feeling than that of awe or dread.

It was, however, a great benefit to Mr. Bramwell, that he was blessed with parents whose knowledge and practice so nearly coincided. We are at this day in the habit of looking back with pity and compassion on the ignorance of those elder times, and of expressing our thankfulness for the superior illumination of these

our glorious days. And in this we act aright, if the retrospect incline us to improve our privileges. But with our uncommon advantages, would there be any misapplication of Scripture, if this passage were repeated to us?—"Wo unto thee, Chorazin! Wo unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes!"

From his parents, whose religious attainments, it is seen, were very limited, Mr. Bramwell imbibed the most *profound veneration for the Lord's day*. And indeed what man ever attained to any eminence in piety, who was not very scrupulous in his regard to the sabbath? As an instance of his extreme tenderness of conscience in this respect, it may be stated, that, during his apprenticeship, he was much attached to botanical pursuits, and kept a number of curious plants and shrubs in the window of his lodging-room. Although some of them, from their delicacy, required particular care and attention, yet if he had neglected to water them on the Saturday evening, and found them drooping in consequence on the Sunday, he would not by watering them commit an act which he considered a breach of the observance of that sacred day, but postponed it until the following morning.

Proper attention to the sabbath must always lead in its train a corresponding *love for the word of God*, and regular habits of perusing it. In Mr. G. Bramwell's family, this was a part of the required duties of that holy day. All the children had their portion of reading assigned them, and were taught to regard the sacred volume as a revelation of mercy from heaven.

How salutary has an early knowledge of the Scriptures often proved! The holy principles which they inculcate, frequently remain latent in the youthful breast until they are elicited by providential circumstances. Then it is that their peculiar importance and gracious effects are very perceptible. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the word of God has been silently "preparing the way of the Lord;" and when

once the heart has been inflamed by a spark of grace, the subjects of this divine change have themselves been amazed at the readiness with which they could bring out of the treasure house of their memory, things new and old.

We may see the effect which this early acquaintance with Scripture truth produced in the mind of the Rev. John Newton, the friend of the poet Cowper. The portions of God's word which he had read when but four years of age, were brought to his recollection above twenty years afterwards, at the time of his short captivity on the coast of Africa. He wondered at the great harvest which had been almost unconsciously husbanded; and when he was not possessed of a Bible to which he could have recourse, and which, with the perverse feelings which he then evinced, he would have been unwilling to peruse,—his unassisted memory furnished him with supplies in abundance. At forty years of age, by a wonderful train of circumstances, he became a minister in the Established Church, and during a space of nearly half a century edified the age in which he lived, and left materials in his writings for instructing future generations. To a similar early initiation in scriptural knowledge, we may attribute the same effects in Mr. William Bramwell. It was owing to this cause that he became a good textuary, and with the utmost ease acquired the habit of referring to the Scriptures for the proof and illustration of the doctrines which he preached.

By his parents Mr. Bramwell was also instructed in *a strict regard to truth.* And this was not inculcated by precept or exhortation alone, but happily recommended by practice. His father, like the great Epaminondas, never told a lie, even in jest. Of whatever importance the affair might be in which George Bramwell's name was mentioned, if it were known that he had sanctioned any thing by his affirmation, his neighbours considered his word to be decisive, and required no farther proof of the authenticity of that matter. For the same humble imitation of the God of truth, his

son William was equally distinguished. Even in his unconverted state, this was a virtue which he constantly practised, and from the observation of which he never receded. On no occasion could he be enticed or intimidated to betray its interests or disobey its dictates; and, in certain instances, in which a person of less firmness would have wavered,—fearless of consequences, he asserted the truth with the boldness of a lion. Unimpeachable veracity is so rare among mankind, that the wicked themselves display a kind of supernatural respect for the manly character in which it is found. It is indeed a legible trace of the Deity, which commands universal admiration, and on which the most sublime virtues have a firm foundation. All these instructions forwarded the operations of divine grace in his mind:—At the early age of seven years, while he was yet under the roof of his father, he was favoured with the awakening visits of God's Holy Spirit; he had powerful convictions of sin, and deeply felt the necessity of a change in his heart and affections. These religious feelings never left him, till he experienced the great blessing of a sound conversion.

In his childhood Mr. Bramwell was much afflicted with the ague and other disorders. He had the small pox when he was six years of age; and such was the excruciating bodily anguish which he felt when this disease had reached its crisis, that, in a paroxysm of pain, he ran out of the house, threw himself into a pond and was completely immersed in the water. But He who "guards the sacred heirs of heaven," had his own gracious purposes to answer by him, and suffered no farther evil consequences to ensue from this involuntary act, than some large boils or blisters which arose on his skin, by which for some time nature endeavoured to cast off her surfeit. These did not cause great irritation or pain, but were very troublesome; and while they remained he was ordered to be confined to his room. Much of his time was then spent in singing psalms in bed. At length all the bad effects

of his indisposition left him; and he gradually recovered his former health and vigour.

Singing was, indeed, always a delightful exercise to Mr. Bramwell. Nature had given him a fine mellow voice, well adapted to sacred music; until his subsequent excessive labour and exertions in the ministerial office had robbed it of its sweetness.

From his infancy he had been well instructed in church psalmody, his vocal powers having early rendered him a favourite among the singers at Cop Chapel. When a child he had a place assigned him in the singers' pew, where a stool was set to elevate him, that his voice might be heard by the whole congregation.

He received such an education as the means of instruction in the village of Elswick could afford. Knowledge had not in those days given itself that elastic bound, which it has since done. The qualifications which were then considered necessary for young persons in the middle ranks of society were not numerous, and few persons could enjoy even the whole of these advantages. In the course of this narrative, it will be perceived how sedulously he applied himself to remedy the defects which he had experienced in his education, and what great success crowned his endeavours.

The early part of his youth was spent at home. His father, who was a farmer, and possessed of a small landed property, employed him for some time in agricultural affairs; but when he had nearly attained the age of sixteen years, he was sent to Liverpool to reside with his eldest brother John, who was a merchant of great respectability in that town. It was intended that William should have been brought up to that profession; but after a short time his disinclination to that calling was so manifest, that his parents desired him to return home; and he was not backward in adopting their advice. His chief ground of dissatisfaction was, that the situation militated against his religious pursuits. His reason informed him, that the seductive dissipation of a gay seaport, and the opportunities which he

would there have of indulging himself in its pleasures, were circumstances ill suited to promote the higher objects that he had in view. As he was at this period very ignorant of vital godliness, he did not perceive how great a disparagement it was to the grace of God, to distrust its sufficiency in preserving him faithful and incorrupt in an honest calling, however numerous and great his temptations might prove. Yet, to the close of his life, he was accustomed to speak of his residence in Liverpool with horror and disgust; and always thanked God that he had been providentially called to escape from the snares and pollutions with which it abounded. He frequently declared it to be his settled belief, that had he remained much longer in Liverpool, he would have been ruined for ever. It is remarkable that only a few weeks before he died, when he was recalling this circumstance to memory in company with Mrs. Bramwell, he expressed his gratitude to God for delivering him from these temptations.

Soon after he had left Liverpool, he engaged himself, with the approbation of his parents, as an apprentice to Mr. Brandreth, a currier in Preston. He had not been long in this new occupation, before he had a severe attack of disease in his chest and stomach. The complaint with which he was afflicted assumed for some time the appearance of a deep consumption: but by the blessing of God on the means which were used to remove this indisposition, he gradually recovered.

His situation was now very comfortable. Mr. Brandreth, though not himself a religious man, placed the greatest confidence in his apprentice, and highly valued him for his unimpeachable honesty and integrity,—qualities of far greater importance in trade than the narrow-minded slaves of sin are willing to allow. An instance of the sterling excellence of these virtues occurred soon after he went into his master's employ: The person who acted as salesman and retailed goods to the customers, was in the habit of giving a more

glowing description of his articles than plain truth would warrant. When those persons hesitated to receive his testimony, he generally appealed for a corroboration to any of the apprentices that were present. The first time William Bramwell was applied to in this manner he instantly replied, "No, sir. The quality of that leather is not so good as you have represented it!" As several persons in the trade were present, when he gave this answer, they conceived the highest opinion of his veracity and uprightness. This anecdote was soon circulated; in consequence of which, his virtue was honoured, and his character became established with all those by whom he was known. His master might have been displeased by this marked preference shown to one who was yet quite a stripling: but he soon experienced the advantage of this mode of transacting business, by the great increase of customers that it brought: "For the Lord blessed his master's house for William's sake, and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house." He had also discovered several malepractices among his fellow apprentices, and, without hesitation or fear of the evil which the delinquents might practise against him, acquainted his master with the knavery. This procured Mr. Brandreth's respect and good will, and he was fully convinced, that such an apprentice was invaluable; and that every act of his would be performed with a particular view to his master's interest.

Although Mr. Bramwell was thus esteemed by his master, it was rather as a faithful and valuable servant, in whom he could repose entire confidence, than as a person cultivating with all his heart the fear of God. Mr. Brandreth, so far from being religious, was entirely ignorant of the nature and power of genuine Christianity. The punctilious fear of offending the Supreme Being, the zealous earnestness in prayer, and preparation for eternity, which he beheld in Mr. Bramwell, he ascribed to the enthusiasm of an overheated mind. It was this ignorance which induced

him to say, "Wm. Bramwell is mad in these things, yet, as a servant he is inestimable." To this also must be imputed the degree of persecution which Mr. B. suffered for religion. The ardour and zeal of his mind in perusing the oracles of divine truth, could not escape the observation of any one who knew him. He prosecuted this study to a very late hour in the night, when he had retired to his chamber. To render these pursuits impossible, he was allowed no candles in the evening. When he was deprived of this resourse he still persevered in the attainment of divine knowledge, and when the family was retired to rest, laying himself down on the hearth, as near the fireplace as possible, by the remnant of the fire he read as long as the cinders afforded any light. Mr. Bramwell has been often heard to relate this circumstance as one of the greatest privations he ever endured, and to urge others to make a right use of those privileges which were in this instance denied to him.

Yet opposition in all its forms was rendered very helpful to his improvement; as it caused him to be more solicitous in devoting every moment of leisure during the day to the perusal of the Sacred Records and other books of instruction. He seized with avidity every opportunity of increasing his knowledge of divine things; and this earnestness soon turned to good account.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Bramwell's convictions—His alarming distress of mind—His acts of austerity and mortification—The anguish of his spirit injures his health—He receives the sacrament for the first time—In that ordinance he obtains a sense of God's pardoning love—His great zeal for the honour of God—He associates with the church singers, and loses much of the consolation which he had felt—He becomes acquainted with a man of piety—After many conflicts, he goes to hear the Methodists, and joins the society.

The salutary effects of the instruction and example of Mr. Bramwell's parents, have been already noticed. During his apprenticeship, his previous convictions were increased in an extraordinary manner. One

Sunday evening, while on his return from Elswick, where he had been to visit his parents, their great kindness to him was suddenly and forcibly brought to his recollection. At the same time he began to reflect with the greatest shame and confusion on his numerous acts of disobedience and ingratitude to them. Though he had been a most dutiful child, yet he was so overpowered at the view of the offences which his memory recalled, that he fell down on his knees in the lane, and there cried aloud to God to have mercy upon him, and to pardon his trangressions. As soon as he arrived at his master's house, in Preston, he retired to his room, and rolled himself on the floor in an agony, like a person distracted. These troubles of mind continued for some time, both night and day, without intermission. He was deeply humbled at the sight of his conduct, and could not be satisfied till he took the earliest opportunity of returning to Elswick, to confess his offences in the presence of his father, and crave his forgiveness. His father, who considered him one of the most dutiful of sons, was surprised and astonished at the power of these convictions, which he could not comprehend. "Dear!" said he, "what hast thou done to lay these heavy charges against thyself? Thou hast not murdered any body." At the same time he told William that so far from being undutiful and ungrateful, he had done nothing which required a parent's forgiveness. With this consoling assurance he returned to Preston greatly relieved in spirit, and formed a strong resolution to change the course of his life. His repentance towards God continued deep and sincere: and he sought every occasion of manifesting it, by frequent acts of fasting, mortification, and prayer. He also attended the service of the parish church, with the most scrupulous regularity; and showed his genuine zeal for the honour of God, and his hatred to sin, by reproving the latter at all seasons, and in every company.

But while he was the subject of these divine operations, he stood alone, and had no pious friend to whom

he could disclose his feelings, or with whom he could take sweet counsel respecting his soul. Of all the professors of Christianity in the neighbourhood the Papists were the strictest; and, to a youthful mind, they appeared to evince some due regard to the external forms of religion. Though he had been sufficiently well instructed to dislike the principles and general practices of that church, yet the austerities, penances, and privations, to which its members occasionally subjected themselves, to him seemed highly reasonable; and at that period he had no doubt of such sacrifices being acceptable to God. Labouring under the greatest concern for the salvation of his soul, he adopted several modes of mortifying the flesh, of the most ascetic and severe descripion, different in some external respects from those of the Roman Catholics, but the same in principle. To remind him of his sins, (on account of which he thought he was not sufficiently humbled,) he frequently cut off the skin and flesh from the ends of his fingers, and would not for some time suffer the self-inflicted wounds to heal. About midnight he often arose and stole down into the kitchen, while the members of his master's family were asleep; then sprinkling a corner of the floor with some of the roughest sand he could find, and uncovering his knees, he knelt down, and in that painful posture spent many hours of the night in fervent supplications for the pardon of his sins. When the apprentices were allowed a day of relaxation, instead of employing it as they did, (in carnal pleasures and worldly amusements,) he retired to an obscure part of a wood near Preston, and, having climbed up a favourite tree, he usually remained there till evening, confessing his sins aloud in the presence of his heavenly Father, and earnestly imploring forgiveness.

Whilst in this disconsolate state of mind, he sometimes wandered from Preston, after the labours of the day; and, walking as far as his father's house in Elswick, [a distance of ten miles,] he has slowly returned the same night, without partaking of the least refresh-

ment, or informing any of his father's family that an individual so wretched as himself was near their abode. After this solitary walk of twenty miles, he was ready to commence his labour, the next morning, with the earliest of his master's workmen.

His constitution was naturally robust. But had his flesh been brass and his sinews iron, the austerities in which he voluntarily persisted for many months would have ruined his health. Strong as he was, he at last found his frame unequal to the inward conflict which was itself sufficiently severe without the infliction of penitential bodily torture. His friends perceived that his countenance became pale, and that his strength was quickly declining. Being concerned for his welfare, they applied for advice to two physicians, who, unable satisfactorily to account for the emaciated state of his body, called the undefined and hidden cause of his unhappiness "a nervous complaint."

But God, who is rich in mercy, shortly afterwards effected for him a great deliverance. He had prepared himself with much prayer and self examination for worthily partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and while in the act of receiving the sacred elements from the hand of the Rev. Mr. Wilson, (a pious clergyman at Preston,) under whose ministry he had greatly profited, he obtained a clear sense of pardon. All his bodily ailments soon forsook him, and his "spirit rejoiced in God his Saviour." Darkness and gloom, guilt and condemnation, were at once removed in a manner incomprehensible to him, and utterly beyond all that he had ever been taught to expect or desire. The height of his joy was equalled only by the previous depth of his sorrow. He testified in every way his unfeigned gratitude to Him who had made him glad with the light of his countenance. Influenced by this principle, he tried even to *purchase* the obedience of others to the commands of his loving Saviour. To this purpose he applied all the money allowed him by his parents. If any young people swore in his presence, he affectionately reproved them, and, if they still per-

sisted, he endeavoured to buy them off from such profane practices, by giving them a sum of money. By this method he induced many to promise that they would no longer be guilty of their customary language of oaths and imprecations. In the same spirit, he often followed depraved individuals into public houses, and dissuaded them from a continuance in their ungodly course of life. He suffered neither rich nor poor, young nor old, to escape reproof, when he perceived any thing in their spirit or conduct that was culpable. In behalf of his divine Master, who had mercifully "called him out of darkness into marvellous light," he had always a word in season.

Yet at this critical period, his Christianity was of a solitary kind. He walked alone in the ways of God. None of his friends appeared to be in earnest for the same blessings as those which he enjoyed. To secure therefore his continuance in the paths of righteousness, and to strengthen his newly formed gracious habits and holy resolutions, he knew of no method equal to that of associating himself with the church singers. He thought that no body of men upon earth approached in their spirit and employment, so nearly to the occupation of "the spirits of just men made perfect," as these cheerful choristers. To join with them in celebrating the high praises of God, appeared to him (artless as he then was,) an object fraught with good, and most gratifying to his pious feelings. He entered heartily into this plan, and was constant in his attendance in the singers' pew. But there were other places more frequented by these rustic musicians than the church. To perfect themselves in their various parts, they considered it needful for the whole fraternity regularly to assemble at a rendezvous; and that most commonly was a large room in an alehouse. By gradually imbibing the spirit and habits of his new associates, Mr. Bramwell almost imperceptibly lost the comfort and happiness which he had so recently experienced. These persons were unfit companions for

one, like him, exercised unto godliness; levity and mirth being their particular delight when they were not immediately engaged in the service of the church. His religious feelings became dull and languid; and in this uncomfortable frame of mind he passed nearly three months.

About this period, one of his friends proposed to lend him the works of the Rev. John Wesley. He accepted the offer; but he soon afterwards returned them unread,—declaring that he durst on no account peruse them, as he was fearful of their corrupting effects, and of the tendency which they would have to destroy his religion.

Mr. Roger Crane, who was then a member of the Methodist society in Preston, had heard that Mr. Bramwell was so much in earnest for the salvation of his soul as to be almost "beside himself." In consequence of this he took some pains to be introduced to him. He soon became acquainted with him, and gained his confidence; and this, after an interchange of many visits, was ripened into a strong and mutual attachment. Such an intimacy was peculiarly pleasing to Mr. Bramwell, and he perfectly acquiesced in all the religious views and statements of his more experienced companion. Christian experience and religious enjoyment were not then novel subjects. He had felt them, and therefore knew their meaning and importance. At length Mr. Crane concluded, that it was his duty to invite his friend to hear a Methodist preacher, and assured him that he would find the truths which he loved, explained in a clearer and more scriptural manner, and with greater comfort to his own mind, than by his favourite clergyman. But though strongly and often solicited, he always declined the invitation; and as a full explanation of his resolution and the motives which influenced him, he told Mr. C. that his father had exacted a promise from him, not to attend the preaching of the Methodists, and had warned all his family against any connexion with such a despicable community. He considered them an infatuated and

deceiving body of people, like wolves in sheep's clothing.

This continued refusal caused a great shyness between the two young men. Their interviews became less frequent; friendship had no longer its former attraction, and in the end their intimacy entirely ceased. They kept apart from each other nearly six months, and, in the interim, Mr. B. became more lax in his principles, and less scrupulous in his conduct. The alluring habits and maxims of the world, which he had hitherto firmly and successfully resisted, seemed almost insensibly to steal upon him. He drooped in spirit, and lost all sensible comfort. He was in this unhappy frame when a conversation that took place between him and Robert Looker, one of his master's workmen, induced him to attend for the first time the preaching of the Methodists. Robert relates the circumstance in the following simple manner:

"I have now been forty years acquainted with Mr. Bramwell. He and I wrought together in the same shop nearly six years. I never knew his equal for strict morality. His parents were rigidly attached to the Established Church. When he received his first religious impressions, he became very zealous. I heard him reprove sin in all places, and the commission of it vexed his righteous soul from day to day. At that time he had neither heard a Methodist preacher nor attended any of their meetings He was prejudiced against them, but yet not so much as his parents were. Their antipathy was deep and inveterate.

"A very wicked old woman lived near my master's shop. She was a notorious swearer and blasphemer. Mr. Bramwell's principles would not allow her to utter oaths and curses in his hearing, without reproving her. One day when she had been exercising herself in her usual way, he wrote a note and sent it to her. It contained some appropriate passages of Scripture, and in the conclusion it was intimated, that, as all profane persons had their portion in the everlasting fire of hell, she was evidently one of them, and must expect

the same dreadful doom unless she repented of her sins and abandoned her evil practices. The old woman knowing that Mr. Bramwell and I were intimate, came like a fury to our house, and with a dreadful oath called Mr. B. (who was absent) *a Methodist devil!* My wife, who was then a strict Roman Catholic,* asked the reason of her warmth. She replied, 'He has sent me a note, in which he says, that I am a wicked woman, and must burn in hell for ever.' More chagrined at hearing him stigmatized for being a *Methodist*, than if he had been censured for open impiety, my wife said, 'Jane, you shall not call him a Methodist, for I am sure he is not one of that sort! When Mr. Bramwell called at our house in the evening, my wife began to relate the charge she had heard against him by saying, 'William! Jane M. has been cursing you and calling you a Methodist; and I told her that no one should give you that scandalous name in my hearing; for I hate it more than any other.'

"On hearing this, Mr. Bramwell turned to me, and said with a smile, 'Robert, did you ever hear the people called Methodists?' I told him I had heard them sometimes in the fields near London, but knew very little about them, as I liked the Church. He said, 'I understand they have begun to preach in Preston; will you go to hear them?' I replied, 'I am quite willing.' He then said, 'My Bible tells me, "They that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution," and these people are much vilified and persecuted.' He told me, he would make some inquiry about the time of preaching; and on the appointed day we repaired together to the small house where these outcasts assembled. We found not more than a dozen persons present, and the sermon was on the subject of the bond

* Mr. Bramwell was, some years afterwards, made an honoured instrument in the conversion of Mrs. Looker and her husband. Both of them have long enjoyed the pleasures of religion, and "*their conversation has been as it becometh the gospel of Christ.*"

woman and the free woman. I liked the drift of the discourse pretty well: yet at that time it did not take hold of my heart. But Mr. Bramwell was like Lydia, whose heart the Lord had opened to receive the word. When we went again we heard old Mr. Hopper, and having begun to meet in class, we were soon afterwards admitted into society. Mr. Longley gave us our first tickets."

About this time, too, his real friend Mr. Crane was told by a person with whom he was intimate, that Mr. Bramwell was afraid he had offended Mr. C. by not going with him to hear the Methodists, although he had been repeatedly invited. He had told the same person, that if Mr. Crane again desired him he certainly would not refuse. Mr. Crane therefore, once more, designedly met him, and commenced a renewal of their former friendship, by requesting the pleasure of his company to hear a Methodist preacher. He cheerfully assented to the proposal of his friend, and in the evening they went and heard Mr. Andrew Inglis. On their return, Mr. Crane asked him how he liked the sermon. "O!" said he, his eyes beaming with joy, "this is the kind of preaching which I have long wanted to hear. These are the people with whom I am resolved to live and die!"

CHAPTER III.

The grief of Mr. Bramwell's parents when they heard that he had become a Methodist—His interview with the Rev. John Wesley—Perplexity of mind respecting his call to the ministry—He becomes the leader of a class and a local preacher—Fruits of his labours—Some account of the manner in which he received the blessing of sanctification—An extract on the same subject from the experience of the Rev. John Fletcher.

After the expiration of Mr. Bramwell's apprenticeship his parents removed from Elswick to Preston, for the sole purpose of enjoying without interruption the society and converse of their son, for whose religious character they entertained the highest esteem. But

how greatly were they mortified when they understood that he had begun to associate with the Methodists! They were so much exasperated, that they threatened to render him no pecuniary assistance towards enabling him to commence business. This, however, had no effect upon him; for he had been taught, that in order to be an approved disciple of Christ, it might in some cases be absolutely necessary to "forsake both father and mother." Yet being very solicitous to promote their spiritual welfare, he continually urged on them the necessity of a change of heart, and had strong and rational ground to hope towards the close of their lives that his labour had not been in vain.

About this time Mr. Wesley visited Preston; and some of Mr. Bramwell's Christian friends took an opportunity of introducing him into the company of that great man. Mr. Wesley looked attentively at him and said, "Well, Brother! can you praise God?" Mr. Bramwell replied, "No, sir!" Mr. Wesley lifted up his hands, and smiling, said, "Well! but perhaps you will to-night." And indeed so it came to pass; for that very night he found the comfort he had lost, and his soul was again enabled to rejoice in the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

This interview was rendered peculiarly beneficial to Mr. Bramwell. He soon received a clearer manifestation of the love of God, and was more fully established in the way of the Lord. His desire for the salvation of sinners was intense; and this impelled him to labour in season and out of season. By his instrumentality prayer meetings at five o'clock in the morning were established. He became the leader of a class; and so zealous was he to promote the best interests of his fellow creatures, that he began to exhort them to flee from the wrath to come.

Very soon after Mr. Wesley's visit, Mr. Bramwell was appointed a local preacher. Not satisfied however with labouring to save souls at Preston, he preached throughout its neighbourhood, and that part of Lancashire, comprising a considerable tract of country, called

the Fylde. It is said that his first text was, 'Prepare to meet thy God!' In visiting most of the villages in the neighbourhood, he met with violent opposition and persecution, so that he might be truly said to have gone with his life in his hand.

He had frequent struggles concerning his call to the ministry, and the subject lay with such weight upon his mind, that he has been known to spend a considerable portion of the night in wrestling with God for divine direction in this important matter. His agony in prayer on these occasions was great; the sweat frequently poured down his face. And in allusion to this subject and the exquisite perplexity of mind in which he was plunged, he often exclaimed to an intimate friend, "Robert! Robert! what shall I do?"

His feelings may, in some measure, be conceived, from the following circumstance related by himself: He was walking one day, with some friends, over Preston-Moor, (about a mile and a half from the town,) when one of them asked him if he knew the place where the Rev. Isaac Ambrose* was accustomed to spend a month in retirement every year, and employ himself day and night in importunate prayer before God for the prosperity of his work. Mr. Bramwell replied, "No! but under a certain hill near this place," (where there was a large sand hole,) "I once spent thirty-six hours together in prayer to the Lord, that I might know his will concerning me."

Although he was thus the subject of much anxiety and temptation, yet he was often encouraged by seeing the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hand. Under

* It is related by the biographer of this heavenly-minded man, that he spent the last years of his life in Preston; and that it was his custom annually to retire into a wood near the moor, and there to secrete himself for an entire month in a small hut, avoiding all human society and converse, and devoting his whole attention to divine contemplation and fervent prayer. By this method he was better fitted, during the remainder of each year, for the services of his sacred calling; and it was generally observed concerning him, that a peculiar unction accompanied his ministrations.

his sermons multitudes were convinced of sin, and many received a knowledge of their acceptance with God. Ann Cutler, or, as she was more familiarly called, "Praying Nanny," a woman remarkable for holiness, was one of the earliest fruits of his labours. She resided at a village near Preston, in which Mr. Bramwell frequently preached.

In the work of the ministry, he spared neither exertion nor expense. He sometimes paid five shillings for the hire of a horse, on the sabbath; and rode forty or fifty miles, preaching three or four times, and that very often in the open air. But it was his usual practice to walk on these occasions.

Striking interpositions of providence were extended to him on many emergencies:—Once as he was returning from preaching, his horse fell and threw him over its head with great violence to a considerable distance. For a long time he lay senseless; but on recovering from the shock he rode forward to Preston, and preached the same evening without any medical assistance. But the consequences of this fall had nearly proved fatal, for he became extremely ill, and his health was with difficulty restored.

Having experienced the pardoning mercy of God, he walked in the fear of the Lord, and enjoyed the comfort of the Holy Ghost. That he might more clearly perceive what was his Christian calling, and enjoy all the salvation purchased by the blood of Christ, he regularly perused the sacred volume and implored Divine direction. Being obedient to the teachings of the Spirit, it was not long before he was convinced of the necessity of a farther work of grace upon his heart. He now saw that it was his privilege to be cleansed from all sin. Miss Brew, now Mrs. George Barker, heard him relate the manner in which he received this great blessing of entire sanctification, nearly in the following words:—"I was for some time deeply convinced of my need of purity, and sought it carefully with tears and entreaties, and sacrifice; thinking nothing too much to give up, nothing too much to do or suffer,—if I might

but attain this pearl of great price. Yet I found it not; nor knew the reason why, till the Lord showed me I had erred in the way of seeking it. I did not seek it *by faith alone*, but, as it were, *by the works of the law*. Being now convinced of my error, I sought the blessing by faith only. Still it tarried a little, but I waited for it in the way of faith. When in the house of a friend at Liverpool, whither I had gone to settle some temporal affairs previously to my going out to travel, I was sitting," said he, "as it might be on this chair," (pointing to the chair on which he sat,) "with my mind engaged in various meditations concerning my affairs and future prospects, my heart now and then lifted up to God, but not particularly about this blessing,—heaven came down to earth; it came to my soul. The Lord, for whom I had waited, came suddenly to the temple of my heart; and I had an immediate evidence that this was the blessing I had for some time been seeking. My soul was then all wonder, love, and praise. It is now about twenty-six years ago; I have walked in this liberty ever since. Glory be to God! I have been kept by his power. By faith I stand. In this as in all other instances, I have proved the devil to be a liar:—he suggested to me a few minutes after I received the blessing, that I should not hold it long,—it was too great to be retained,—and that I had better not profess it."

Proceeding, he said, "I walked fifteen miles that night to a place where I had an appointment to preach; and, at every step I trod, the temptation was repeated, 'Do not profess sanctification, for thou wilt lose it.' But in preaching that night, the temptation was removed, and my soul was again filled with glory and with God. I then declared to the people what God had done for my soul; and I have done so on every proper occasion since that time, believing it to be a duty incumbent upon me. For God does not impart blessings to his children to be concealed in their own bosoms, but to be made known to all who fear him and desire the enjoyment of the same privileges. I think such a

blessing cannot be retained, without professing it at every fit opportunity; for thus we glorify God, and 'with the mouth make confession unto salvation.'"

This account is much in unison with the following declarations on the same subject by the Rev. John Fletcher of Madeley. They are extracted from the diary of that excellent woman, the late Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers; and are here inserted that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word of this glorious doctrine *may be established.*"

"Leeds, Aug. 24, 1781.—That dear man of God, Mr. Fletcher, came with Miss Bosanquet, (now Mrs. Fletcher,) to dine at Mr. Smith's in Park-Row; and also to meet the select society. After dinner, I took an opportunity to beg he would explain an expression he once used to Miss Loxdale in a letter, viz. 'That on all who are renewed in love, God bestows the gift of prophecy.' He called for the Bible,—then read and sweetly explained the second chapter of the Acts: observing, 'to prophesy,' in the sense *he* meant, was to magnify God with the *new heart* of love, and the *new tongue* of praise, as they did who on the day of pentecost were filled with the Holy Ghost!—and he insisted that believers are now called to make the same confession, seeing we may all prove the same baptismal fire. He showed that the day of pentecost was only the *opening* of the dipensation of the Holy Ghost,—the great promise of the Father! And that 'the latter day glory,' which he believed was near at hand, should far *exceed* the first effusion of the Spirit. Therefore seeing *they* then bore witness to the grace of our Lord, so should *we;* and like them, spread the flame of love! Then after singing a hymn, he cried,—'O to be filled with the Holy Ghost! I want to be filled! O my friends, let us wrestle for a more abundant outpouring of the Spirit!'—To me he said, 'Come, my sister, will *you* covenant with me this day, to pray for the *fulness of the Spirit?* Will *you* be a witness for Jesus?'—I answered with flowing tears,—'In the strength of Jesus I will.' He cried, 'Glory, glory, glory be to God!

Lord, strengthen thy handmaid to keep this covenant even unto death.' He then said,—'My dear brethren and sisters, God is here! I feel him in this place! But I would hide my face in the dust, because I have been ashamed to declare what he hath done for me! For many years I have grieved his Spirit,—but I am deeply humbled: and he has again restored my soul! Last Wednesday evening he spoke to me by these words, "Reckon yourselves therefore to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." I obeyed the voice of God: I now obey it, and tell you all, to the praise of his love, *I am freed from sin!*—Yes, I rejoice to declare it, and to bear witness to the glory of his grace, that "I am dead unto sin, and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ," who is my Lord and King! I received this blessing four or five times before; but I lost it by not observing the order of God, who hath told us, "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness; and with the *mouth*, *confession* is made unto salvation." But the enemy offered his bait under various colours, to keep me from a public declaration of what my Lord had wrought.

"'When I first received this grace, Satan bid me wait awhile, till I saw more of the *fruits;* I resolved to do so, but I soon began to doubt of the *witness*, which before I had felt in my heart; and was in a little time sensible I had lost both. A second time, after receiving this salvation, (with shame I confess it,) I was kept from being a witness for my Lord, by the suggestion, "Thou art a public character; the eyes of *all* are upon *thee;* and if, as before, by *any* means thou lose the blessing, it will be a dishonour to the doctrine of *heart holiness*, &c." I held my peace and again forfeited the gift of God! At another time, I was prevailed upon to hide it by reasoning,—"How few, even of the children of God, will receive this testimony! many of them supposing every transgression of the Adamic law is sin: and therefore if I profess myself to be free from sin, *all* these will give my profession the lie, because I am not free in *their* sense:—I am not free from ignorance, mis-

takes, and various infirmities. I will therefore enjoy what God has wrought in me, but I will not say I am perfect in love."—Alas! I soon found again,—"He that hideth his Lord's talent and improveth it not, from that unprofitable servant shall be taken away even that he hath."

"'Now, my brethren, you see my folly! I have confessed it in your presence, and *now* I resolve, before you all, to confess my Master! I will confess him to all the world! And I declare unto you, in the presence of God, the HOLY TRINITY, I am now "dead indeed unto sin." I do not say, "I am crucified with Christ;" because, some of our well-meaning brethren say, "by *this* can only be meant a *gradual dying*,"—but I profess unto you, "I am dead unto sin, and alive unto God." And remember,—all this is "through Jesus Christ our Lord!" He is my PROPHET, PRIEST, and KING! My indwelling holiness! MY ALL IN ALL!—I wait for the fulfilment of that prayer,—"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us;—And that they may be one, even as we are one."—O for that pure baptismal flame!—O for the fulness of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost! Pray, pray, pray, for this! This shall make us all of one heart and of one soul!—Pray for *gifts*—for the gift of *utterance:* and confess your royal Master! A man without gifts, is like the king in disguise: He appears as a subject only! You are *kings and priests unto God;* Put on, therefore, your robes, and wear, on your *garter*, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.'

"A few days after this, I heard Mr. Fletcher preach from the same subject; which greatly encouraged and strengthened me. He invited all who felt the need of full redemption, to believe *now* for this great salvation. He observed,—'As when you reckon with your creditor, or with your host; and as, when you have paid all, you reckon yourselves free; so, now reckon with God,—Jesus hath paid all: and he hath paid for thee! hath purchased *thy pardon* and *holiness*. Therefore it is now God's command,—"Reckon thyself dead indeed

unto sin;" and thou art alive unto God from this hour! O begin, begin to reckon now! Fear not,—believe, believe, believe! And continue to believe every moment; so shalt thou continue free. For it is retained, as it is received, by *faith alone*. And whosoever thou art that perseveringly believest, it will be as a fire in thy bosom, and constrain thee to confess with thy mouth, thy LORD AND KING JESUS! And, in spreading the sacred flame of love, thou shalt still be saved to the uttermost.'

"He also dwelt largely on those words, 'where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' He asked 'How did sin abound? Has it not overspread your whole soul? Were not all your passions, tempers, propensities, and affections, inordinate and evil? Did not pride, anger, self will, and unbelief, all reign in you? And when the Spirit of God strove with you, did you not repel all his convictions, and put him far from you? Well, my brethren, "Ye were *then* the servants of sin, and were free from righteousness: but now, being free from sin, ye become servants to God;" and holiness shall overspread your whole soul; so that all your tempers and passions shall be henceforth regulated and governed by HIM who now sitteth upon the throne of your heart, making all things new! They shall therefore be *all* holy. And as you once resisted the Holy Spirit, so now you shall have power as easily to resist all the subtle frauds or fierce attacks of Satan. Yea, his suggestions to evil shall be like a ball thrown against a wall of brass! It shall rebound back again; and you shall know what that meaneth—"The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me."'

"He then, with lifted hands, cried, 'Who will thus be saved? Who will believe the report? You are only in an improper sense called believers who reject this. Who is a believer? One that believes *a few things* which his God hath spoken? Nay, but one who believes *all* that ever proceeded out of his mouth!—Here then is the word of the Lord, "As sin abounded, grace shall much more abound!" As no *good thing*

was in you by nature, so now no *evil thing* shall remain! Do you believe this? Or, are you a *half* believer, only?—Come, Jesus is offered to thee as a *perfect Saviour;* take him and he will make thee a *perfect saint!* O ye half believers, will you still plead for the murderers of your Lord? Which of these will you hide as a serpent in your bosom? Shall it be anger, pride, self will, or *accursed* unbelief? O be no longer befooled! "bring these enemies to thy Lord, and let him slay them."'

"Some days after this, being in Mr. Fletcher's company, he took me by the hand, and said,—'Glory be to God for *you*, my sister!—still bear a noble testimony for your Lord. Do you repent your confession of his salvation?' I answered, *Blessed be God I do not.*—At going away, he again took me by my hand, saying, with eyes and heart lifted up,—'Bless her, heavenly Power!' It seemed as if an instant answer was given, and a beam of glory let down!—I was filled with deep humility and love. Yea my whole soul overflowed with unutterable sweetness."

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Bramwell is called to supply the place of an itinerant preacher in Liverpool—He is recalled at the earnest request of his Preston friends—He commences business on his own account—Is again solicited by Dr. Coke to become an itinerant preacher—After some consideration, he embraces the offer, and begins to travel in the Kent circuit—His manner of life, and ardent desire for the conversion of sinners—He is again brought into doubt respecting his call to the ministry—Preaches at the place where seven men were executed—A remarkable dream.

Mr. Bramwell was much blessed in his labours as a local preacher; and it was soon the unanimous sentiment of the church, that he was calculated for a much more extended sphere of usefulness. Indeed, for four years after he was free from his apprenticeship, he had himself felt a powerful persuasion that he was

called by the great Head of the church to the exercise of the ministry. On this account he had purposely abstained from engaging in any secular employment for his own benefit, although he had an opportunity of doing it to great advantage. During the whole of this period he had been occupied in introducing the doctrines and the discipline of the Methodists into many of the uncivilized districts around Preston, in a manner the most zealous and disinterested,—his exertions being made entirely at his own charge. Such was the general impression which he had of his designation to serve God in the gospel of his Son. But with him, (as with many other eminent heralds of Christ,) this impression was subject to some fluctuating doubts; and it occasionally became the ground work of Satan's buffeting and temptation. Yet it still retained its firm hold on his mind, and impelled him to continue his services in that best of causes, to which he considered himself devoted.

About that time some new places had been added to the Liverpool circuit. It therefore became requisite to have an additional preacher. Mr. Bramwell, having been recommended by the superintendent, was appointed by Mr. Wesley to go there and officiate as an itinerant preacher till the following conference. He immediately complied; but he had not been long employed in this capacity before a strong representation was made by his friends at Preston, to induce Mr. Wesley to recall him, as the work of God in that town was then increasing, and Mr. Bramwell's labours were particularly required for its furtherance. To this request Mr. Wesley acceded, and Mr. Bramwell accordingly returned to Preston, to the great joy of those who had known him and felt the power of his preaching. By this arrangement, his parents, who had almost given him up as a desperate seceder from their principles, were exceedingly gratified, and fondly hoped to regain their former influence over him.

He now thought his lot determined, and himself providentially settled for life in Preston. He therefore

commenced the business to which he had served an apprenticeship. But the Lord had prepared for him a far more important station, in which he had designed him to act a most conspicuous part. Not many months after he had taken a shop and house, Dr. Coke wrote to him several times, and earnestly requested him to give up his business, become an itinerant preacher, and travel in the Kent circuit. Against the Doctor's arguments very powerful obstacles presented themselves: Mr. Bramwell was comfortably settled in business; his worldly prospects were peculiarly inviting, and he had formed an honourable and intimate connexion with a pious young lady, a native of Preston, who had been converted under his preaching at an early period of his ministrations. He was surrounded by his family connexions. His father and mother had shown themselves less bigoted in religious matters, and had evinced something resembling an esteem for Methodism. In fine, every thing concurred to invite him to sit down, acquire a fortune, and enjoy himself among his friends.

This was a most important crisis in his life; and his feelings on the occasion may be more easily conceived than expressed. He earnestly sought direction from Heaven, and consulted his Christian friends. At length, believing that he was called of God to devote himself entirely to the work of the ministry, he no longer conferred with flesh and blood, but immediately settled his temporal affairs, purchased a horse and a pair of saddle bags, and rode to the Kent circuit, in the winter of 1785,—a distance of about three hundred miles.

When Mr. Bramwell reached Canterbury, he found the society in a very languid state, a division having taken place some time previous to his arrival. But his entrance into the circuit, with that man of God, Mr. Shadford, was the means of such a revival as had not been witnessed for many years. Mr. Bramwell adopted, from Mr. Shadford, a plan of more extensive usefulness and devotedness to God; and though he afterwards studied the lives of eminent ministers, (and particularly that of Mr. T. Walsh,) yet he never ceased to remem-

ber and imitate his venerable colleague. The people regarded Mr. Bramwell as a messenger of God, and expressed an earnest wish, that those preachers who should afterwards labour among them, might always manifest the same zeal, love, and disinterestedness in the sacred cause.

His genuine piety and affectionate concern for the welfare of souls, and for the prosperity of the work of God, were evinced in the whole of his deportment among the people, and he was so truly consistent, that he never ppeared to lose sight of his character as a Christian inister. Into whatever company he went, he seemed o carry with him a consciousness of the Divine presence, which influenced the whole of his conduct. His isits were generally short, and he had such a happy ethod of improving the present moment, that *levity* and *trifling* could never appear in his presence. Frequently when at prayer, so powerfully did he wrestle th God that the room seemed filled with the Divine glory, in a manner the most extraordinary; which made some persons ready to imagine, that the very boards shook under them.

As there were many young persons added to the ociety in that circuit, he saw it necessary to guard them against the temptations to which young people are exposed; and to give greater effect to his exhortations, he addressed the different sexes separately. One Sunday evening he would request the women in the society to stop, and not one of the other sex to be present. The following sabbath he would meet all the men, and them only. This method had a good effect: it prevented the appearance of partiality, and gave him an opportunity of using much plainness of speech, and a greater degree of faithfulness. His instructions could not fail to be well received, because they were given with affection; while the correctness of his own deportment rendered him unimpeachable.

The prayer meetings were generally held in private houses; and as he knew the spiritual condition of certain persons present, when the meetings were over, he

sometimes detained the people, saying, "Stop, friends! let us spend a few moments more for such and such a person. Probably such a one may be present and yet unblessed." At a meeting of this kind, while Mr. Bramwell was agonizing in prayer, a powerful effusion of the Spirit descended upon the people, as though a flash of lightning had darted into the room. All present were deeply affected: and at that moment Mrs. Parnell, who was in great distress, received a clear manifestation of the pardoning love of God.

Though his labours were crowned with signal success, yet he was often greatly depressed in spirit, and tempted to leave the work in which he was engaged. On one of these occasions, he went to unbosom his mind to an old friend, in whose opinion he placed the greatest confidence. "Billy," said the old man, "I will tell thee what thou must do; thou must go into thy closet, lock thyself up, and there take a review of thy life. If thou canst find that God has blessed thee with a *single mercy*, praise him for it." Mr. Bramwell went and practised the advice which the old man had recommended; and immediately the remembrance of one mercy after another entered his mind. He saw that his whole life was marked with mercy. Gratitude sprung up in his heart. He broke forth in praises to God, took encouragement, and went forward in the name of the Lord. He often remarked that, in such cases, it is a great blessing to have a judicious friend at hand.

Like a faithful servant, he lost no opportunity of doing good whenever an occasion presented itself, although numerous dangers and difficulties might surround him in the attempt. Thus when seven young men were condemned to be hanged at Maidstone, another young preacher and he, on hearing of the intended execution, were much affected, and thought that one of them ought to preach on the occasion. After mature reflection, it was determined that Mr. Bramwell should address the assembled multitude. A large

blockstone became his pulpit. When he began to speak to the immense concourse of people, the general cry was, "Knock the fellow down! Kill him!" At this moment, a gentleman on horseback rode among the crowd, and cried, "He is a good man! let him alone! hear him!" Through this stranger's manly interference, he was permitted to proceed and to finish his discourse. But he never knew the person to whom he was then indebted for a peaceful congregation.

In the same circuit he was forewarned, in a dream, of approaching danger. He dreamed that he was waylaid in a certain road by some men, who wished to kill him. Having to go that way some time afterwards, his dream occurred to him; he thought that there might be something intended by it; he therefore determined to turn aside, and went another way. By adopting this resolution, he providentially escaped; for, as he afterwards found, certain men of bad character had been waiting for him at that very time with a fixed resolution to murder him, if he had passed along the road by which he usually went.

He was once desired to pray with an unhappy female who was very ill, and who had been much addicted to drunkenness. Some time before, her husband had become pious, and had often invited Mr. Bramwell to his house. This woman had been raised several times in answer to his prayers. He was sent for once more in haste from his circuit, to pray for her. When he arrived, he and her husband knelt down; and after being silent a few minutes he exclaimed, "I can pray no more! The Lord will not answer! She will now die!" and, in the course of a few hours, the unhappy woman died.

This was the first year of his itinerant ministry, during which he did not spare himself, but was "in labours more abundant." By the Spirit of God he was instructed in many things that concerned the great work in which he was engaged. He delighted in his sacred calling; and, from the success which attended

his preaching, he was encouraged with increased earnestness to "do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of his ministry."

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Bramwell's marriage—Some misunderstanding with Mr. Wesley—By an extraordinary chain of circumstances, he is directed to labour in the Blackburn circuit—His continued diligence—The mode of educating his children—His appointment to the Colne circuit.

It appears that Mr. Bramwell was to have been married on his return from Liverpool; but as Dr. Coke had repeatedly solicited him to go to Kent, he had the firmness to bid adieu to the object of his affections, and did not see her again until a year and a half had elapsed. Previous, however, to his acquiescence with Dr. Coke's request, he informed him that he could only go on condition that he might be married as soon as he returned. What the Doctor said to him is not now known; but Mr. Bramwell always understood that he had obtained his promise and consent. He regularly corresponded with the young lady, Miss E. Byrom, who was of a very respectable family; and on his return to Preston, they were married accordingly, in July, 1787. At the conference for the same year, he was appointed by Mr. Wesley to labour in the Lynn circuit, but, as Mrs. Bramwell could not leave Preston on account of the arrangement of some family concerns, he thought it was not his duty to go to Lynn, and wrote to Mr. Wesley to that effect. Mr. W. did not think proper to appoint him to any other circuit, although he was earnestly requested to do so by Mr. Shadford, and some other aged preachers, who regarded Mr. Bramwell as an eminently useful and holy young man. His name therefore remained on the stations for Lynn, but he continued in Preston.

To a man more inflated with an idea of his own consequence than Mr. Bramwell was, or less fervent and

sincere in his wishes for the salvation of sinners, this second deferring of his hopes would have been most grievous and distressing. But though he was naturally of a sanguine disposition, the grace of God had humbled his views and made him willing to behold the glorious remedy of saving truth administered by any other hands than his own. He did not rate his ministerial talents so highly as to imagine, with some weaklings, that when he was quiescent, the wheels of Christ's church would not move at all, or would only have a tardy motion. He very properly considered it a high honour to have "a dispensation of the gospel committed to him" by Christ Jesus, and to bear some humble, yet active part in the grand operations of human redemption. In the bare anticipation of this he had rejoiced, when he was first called to Liverpool. And when he was so honourably remanded to Preston, to move in an humbler sphere, and preach the glad tidings of peace among his friends and relatives, he had felt the summons to be no small trial. Yet to that which he deemed a providential call, he had yielded a cheerful obedience. He had now again dedicated himself wholly to the work of the ministry, and by an unexpected occurrence* was compelled to desist from his labours

* When, in compliance with Dr. Coke's entreaties, he consented to give up his business and take a circuit, it was a stipulation between the Doctor and him, that Mr. B. should not be required to wait the usual period of probation before his marriage. Dr. Coke also promised him the benefit of his good offices with Mr. Wesley, for his appointment to the Blackburn circuit. The Doctor had either been unsuccessful in his application to Mr. W. or had omitted the mention of all the particulars; for Mr. B. was nominated for the Lynn circuit. He accounted this a breach of engagement; and in his subsequent correspondence with Mr. W., it is probable that he mentioned without hesitation his recent marriage with Miss Byrom, a circumstance which Mr. W. had not before known, and which for the moment might give him some umbrage.

The key to the whole of this proceeding is, that, in the latter part of Mr. Wesley's life, the care of many of the societies devolved on Dr. Coke; and Mr. Bramwell had stipulated with the proxy instead of the principal. Yet there was not even the

as an itinerant preacher. This was a season in which Satan assailed him with heavy temptations. But having committed nothing worthy of reproach, he maintained his wonted firmness of spirit. He did not, like many, sullenly refuse to lend his hearty co-operation to the cause of God; but with pleasure embraced every opportunity of declaring the glad tidings of salvation.

It is not here meant to be insinuated, that Mr. Bramwell showed throughout this affair any disposition of mind allied to stoical apathy. On the contrary, this proved to him a period of considerable anxiety. It called for the exercise of all the faith and patience of which he was possessed. Not knowing how to act, he sometimes thought, that after all, the Lord might still intend him to be a man of business. But he recollected the word of the Lord, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy path." He gave himself to prayer, asked counsel of God, and was always ready to say, "Speak, Lord! thy servant heareth." His way was soon made plain, and that in a manner which he could never have anticipated.

In order more clearly to elucidate this circumstance, it may be necessary to produce the following account, related by Mr. James Gray, and inserted in the Methodist Magazine for March, 1818.

"The Bristol conference for 1786 appointed Messrs. Joshua Keighly and Edward Burbeck to labour in the Inverness circuit. They met at Aberdeen, and set off for that circuit together; when approaching within two miles of Keith, on the high hill which overlooks it, in the dusk of the evening about sunset, they beheld, about twenty yards from them, a dark shade like a screen drawn right across the road. They took courage and rode up to it, which divided and opened like a

shadow of bad faith on the part of Dr. C. He did not think it necessary on every occasion of this kind, to burden Mr. W.'s mind with matters of minor importance; and he rejoiced greatly, when Mr. W., a few weeks afterwards, so promptly appointed Mr. B. to the circuit of his choice.

two-leaf gate; and as they passed through it, an audible voice said, 'You may pass on to your circuit, but shall never return to England.'

"This prediction was actually accomplished, in the death of these two holy men of God in the course of the year. They slept at Keith that night, and next noon arrived at Elgin, where I then lived: I called at their lodgings, and found Mr. Keighly reading, and Mr. Burbeck had gone to bed, having rested none the preceding night, owing to the thoughts of the vision and the voice. Mr. Keighly then told me solemnly and seriously what I have related above.

"They continued to fulfil the duties of their ministry until the end of July, about the time of the sitting of conference; when Mr. Keighly was seized with a brain fever, and died on the eighth day. (See my letter to Mr. Wesley, with a short account of his death, published in July 1788.)*

"Mr. Burbeck came four days after from Inverness,

* As some additional particulars occur in the account of Mr. Joshua Keighly, to which Mr. Gray here refers, they are subjoined for the information of the pious reader:

"He never expected his illness to be unto death, till about three days before he died: when he said, 'You shall have a twofold preacher here before Sunday.'

"As there was no preacher on the spot, I took charge of his remains; wrapt them in fine linen, (like his Lord and Master;) gave letters of invitation to ministers and magistrates; and a gentleman gave me the use of his tomb to bury him in, which I gladly accepted.

"The people of Elgin lament the death of this pious young man, whose preaching and holy conversation were made so great a blessing to many. And had it not been for the violence of his disorder, I doubt not but he would have borne as good a testimony for God in his last moments, as he had done before for many years.

"When he was at Inverness last spring, he dreamed that he was condemned to die on the morrow. However, he obtained leave of the judge to go and acquaint his father with his fate, and to prepare him for the shock: which as soon as he had done, the judge appeared to him again, and said, 'I have got you a short respite; but depend upon it, you shall die in Scotland.'

"How unaccountable is this on the Infidel and Sadducean supposition? But how plain on that of a Christian!"

and lodged with me, until he received his appointment from conference, which was for the Blackburn circuit. He seemed anxious to get out of our circuit, that he might defeat the prediction. In pursuing his journey to Keith, he was taken ill, four miles before he reached that village, and was carried thither sick of a fever, and died on the ninth day.

"Mr. Keighly was possessed of powerful natural talents, piety, and zeal for the salvation of the souls of men. Mr. Burbeck's constitution was nervous; but with a more pious, sincere, and upright minister, the church of Christ is seldom blessed."

Br. Burbeck's box arrived at Blackburn, and the society were in daily expectation of seeing him. But they were afflicted with the intelligence, that he had died in Scotland on his way to the circuit. This providence was truly mysterious, and especially when the circumstances that preceded it are considered. The society at Blackburn wrote to Mr. Wesley concerning it, informing him that they were without a preacher, and, it is probable, some mention was made of Mr. Bramwell in the same letter. Mr. Wesley immediately replied, by requesting Mr. Bramwell to take the Blackburn circuit, and labour in Mr. Burbeck's place.

To him and his friends this event appeared almost miraculous, and no room was left for the reasonings of unbelief. He was now fully persuaded that he was called of God, and instantly prepared for his new station. Had he wished to fix upon a circuit that would have been the most convenient for himself and his wife, it would have been Blackburn, which then included the town of Preston, where it was necessary that Mrs. B. should remain until her temporal and domestic affairs were regulated and finally settled. In the whole of this transaction it is easy to trace the footsteps of the Almighty, who is never at a loss to accomplish his own infinitely wise and gracious purposes by a thousand wondrous "ways to foolish man unknown."

The society at Blackburn received Mr. Bramwell as an angel of the Lord. He left Mrs. B. at Preston,

while he laboured in the circuit with his usual acceptance and success. Even at this early period of his ministry, his Christian beneficence was truly remarkable ;—when he met with objects of distress, he often gave them his all. When he returned to Preston, to see Mrs. B., which was only once in a month, he generally requested her to supply him with more money, that he might have still farther scope for the exercise of his charity.

While he remained at Blackburn, he was exposed to the various persecutions which then raged against the followers of Mr. Wesley. Religious liberty was at that time neither understood nor practised ; and, too frequently, those who ought to have redressed the wrong, were the most zealous in exciting it.

In visiting some places in this circuit, Mr. Bramwell was obliged to pass a tan yard where several bull dogs were kept. These were always let loose upon him, and he was obliged to defend himself from their ferocious attacks as well as he could. A large stick, pointed with iron, (which he procured for the purpose,) was his weapon of defence ; it served also to assist him in walking Notwithstanding this, his legs were frequently torn in a dangerous manner by these animals. The remembrance of the sufferings he thus endured, caused him in the succeeding part of his life, to feel the greatest aversion to meet, alone and unprotected, dogs of this description. For many years afterwards, and when the rights of toleration had become so far fixed as to render self defence unnecessary, the stick pointed with iron was preserved, in memory of the good offices which it had rendered to its owner.

We are now called to behold Mr. Bramwell in a different relation and summoned to fulfil other important duties in life. Having entered into the marriage state with one who was in every respect suitable for him, he did not, like too many, relax in his zealous exertions, and become remiss in the discharge of his ministerial functions; but while he manifested the greatest kindness to her who shared largely in his affections, he

seemed to feel the import of these words of the apostle, "It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none,—and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not: for the fashion of this world passeth away." On his return home from the circuit, his first inquiries in general were concerning spiritual things. He evinced the strongest desire to promote the best interests of a wife whom he ardently loved. Whenever he was called to leave her, he uniformly commended her to God in earnest prayer.

In September, 1778, the Lord blessed him with a son, whom he named George after his father. Mrs. Bramwell was confined during his absence from Preston. But she was speedily raised up again; and having regained her former strength, was soon enabled to perform the part of a mother to the immortal deposit with which she had been entrusted. It was her strongest wish, as it was eminently Mr. Bramwell's, that this child, as well as all their future progeny, should be trained up in the service of God, to occupy the particular department which Providence might afterwards assign to each of them. To store their infant minds with the best principles, at the same time that they were instructed in useful learning, Mr. Bramwell knew was the only proper way of qualifying them for filling any station to which they might be called.

He had read Mr. Wesley's advice concerning the duty of parents towards their children, and resolved to act accordingly. He therefore determined to break their wills at an early period, and not to suffer them to cry aloud in his presence after they were ten months old. Although this may seem strange and unaccountable to those parents who criminally indulge their children, yet it is a fact which ought to be generally known, that Mr. Bramwell's children, when in health, were never permitted to cry aloud in his presence after they had attained to that age. "He ruled well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." It must, however, be granted, that this would require a degree of apparent severity, which, if sanc-

tioned in theory by parents in general, would probably never need to be adopted in practice. The propriety of Mr. Wesley's assertion on this particular, has often been questioned, and some have said, that had he been a parent himself, he would have been better informed. But, with Mr. Bramwell, this method was not problematical: he tried the experiment, and most salutary were the effects which it produced. His children feel to this day, that they have the greatest reason to praise God, for being favoured, in early life, with the affectionate attentions of such a parent. The intense love which he entertained for all of them, is evinced in various parts of the correspondence subjoined to this memoir.

At the conference of the year 1789, Mr. Bramwell was appointed to the Colne circuit, in Lancashire. He travelled there two years, and the Lord blessed his labours during the whole of that time in an eminent manner. He resided at Southfield, about two miles distant from Colne. This circuit was large in extent; and he was frequently thirty miles from home. Mrs. B. was now called to endure all those privations to which the wives of the preachers were subjected, in the commencement of Methodism. She had left her friends, and her home at Preston, to reside among strangers; and instead of enjoying the society of her husband, which might have compensated for other inconveniences, so unremitting were his exertions, and so fervent his zeal, in promoting the interests of religion and the conversion of sinners, that he was never at home, excepting one night in the course of every six weeks.

In this circuit he was obliged to have recourse to his private property, and that of Mrs. B., for the means of subsistence, and for the indulgence of that benevolence, which (according to his power) was boundless.

But amidst all the outward difficulties with which he had to contend, "the pleasure of the Lord still prospered in his hand." "He went on his way rejoicing;" while by reading, meditation, and prayer, he continued

sedulously to qualify himself for the important charge with which he had been entrusted. By this judicious course, he "studied to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." His "profiting soon appeared unto all men." They perceived that "the hand of the Lord was with him." And while he improved in gifts and graces, the people of his care "rejoiced in the light which was thus transmitted." Among those in the Colne circuit who received their first religious impressions under his ministry, many will be found to be "his crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming." And what feeling in this mortal state can be conceived more exquisite in anticipation, than that of a beloved pastor presenting the redeemed of his flock, before the throne of Jehovah, with, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me!"

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Bramwell's removal to the Dewsbury circuit—State of religion in that town and neighbourhood—He gives himself to prayer—The work of God begins to prosper—Ann Cutler is rendered useful in the revival—Great numbers converted—A remarkable dream—Causes of his great popularity—Mr. Wesley's rules for a helper.

At the conference in 1791, Mr. Bramwell was stationed for Dewsbury. Before that period, some very unpleasant disputes had existed among the society in that place; in consequence of which, a Mr. Atlay was called by the trustees to be their minister, and the chapel was then lost to the Methodist Connexion.

On Mr. Bramwell's arrival, he soon found that religious animosities and foolish bickerings had nearly destroyed the religion of both parties. To a minister of Christ whose only desire is to see Zion in prosperity, such a state of things would be peculiarly afflictive, and perhaps few could have felt it more keenly than Mr. Bramwell. He mourned in private before the

Lord; and from the commencement of his ministry among that people, he resolved to enter into no disputes. His object was to win souls to Christ: with him, the possession of chapels was a thing of little importance. Adverting to the state of the society, he on one occasion writes as follows:—"I could not find a person who experienced sanctification, and but few who were clear in pardon. The societies in some places increased, but active religion scarcely appeared!"

Having witnessed the powerful effects of prayer in other places, he now began to supplicate the God of all grace. He exhorted the people to join him in this important duty; and, to afford them more frequent opportunities of doing this, he instituted prayer meetings at five o'clock in the morning. The blessed effects of these earnest intercessions were soon apparent. At a band meeting, in November, 1792, four persons entered into the glorious liberty of sanctification; one of whom, Mr. Joseph Drake, an itinerant preacher, who died in the year 1815, testified to the last, of this great salvation. It has often been remarked, that when this doctrine is clearly and fully preached, and when a work of grace thus deepens in a society, there is generally a considerable increase of new converts: such was the case in the Dewsbury circuit.

About the same period, Ann Cutler was led to visit Dewsbury. It was her constant practice to rise between three and four o'clock in the morning and wrestle with God for a revival, while Mr. Bramwell was engaged in the same exercise at that early hour in another apartment. It was almost impossible for any one to take repose by sleep, or be unrefreshed in spirit, while near two such zealous persons, who often relieved the burden of their souls by praying aloud. At length the Lord was graciously pleased to manifest his saving power among the people. Mr. Bramwell remarks, "As I was praying in my room, I received an answer from God in a particular way, and had the revival discovered to me in its manner and effects. I had no more doubt. All my grief was gone; I could say,

'The Lord will come;—I know he will come, and that suddenly.'"

He then says, "Nothing appeared very particular till, under Nanny Cutler's prayer, one person received a clean heart. We were confident that the Lord would do the same for others.

"At a prayer meeting, two found peace with God; and in that week, two more received the same blessing. On the Sunday morning we had a love feast for the bands, when several were much concerned for sanctification. One young woman received the blessing. On the Monday evening the bands met. A remarkable spirit of prayer was given to the people. Four persons received sanctification, and some were left in distress.

"Several who were the most prejudiced, were suddenly struck, and in agonies groaned for deliverance. On the Thursday, one who had been exceedingly pained for purity of heart, for a fortnight, was delivered.

"The work continued almost in every meeting; and sixty persons in and about Dewsbury received sanctification, and walked in that liberty. Our love feasts began to be crowded, and people from every neighbouring circuit visited us. Great numbers found pardon, and some perfect love. They went home and declared what God had done for them.

"The more I consulted the Acts of the Apostles and Church History, the more I was convinced, that this was no new thing, either in its manner or effects; but that in every great work of God, similar effects were produced. I consulted several of the senior brethren, who exhorted me to use every means to support the revival. Satan began to use his agents in different ways: some said one thing, and some another, but no man without the Spirit of God, can properly judge of the matter."

The work then began to spread in almost every direction. In one quarter, about one hundred new members were added to the society, and many believers were quickened, and excited to greater diligence and

activity in the work of the Lord. Mr. Bramwell "rejoiced as one that had found great spoil." To see sinners awakened, penitents pardoned, and believers enjoying sanctification,—afforded him the most lively satisfaction. This great revival occurred during the *second* year of his stay in Dewsbury. The *first* he describes as "a year of hard labour and much grief." It was the season of "his sowing in tears," but in the second year "he reaped in joy." On more occasions than this, he verified in his own experience that declaration of the psalmist,—"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with *rejoicing*, bringing his *sheaves* with him." Being a man "strong in faith, he continued instant in prayer." While he waited on the Lord, he was of good courage, and the Lord strengthened his heart. From the time when he first entered on his labours in the Dewsbury circuit, his heart would have fainted within him, "unless he had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

Thus was his joy fulfilled in many of the souls confided to his care by the great Shepherd. In order to be rendered more extensively useful, he visited them from house to house; and advised, reproved, exhorted, or comforted them, as circumstances might require. In some instances, his great concern for the temporal, as well as the spiritual welfare of the people, was instrumental in effecting the conversion of those who had before been careless and unconcerned about their personal salvation. His uniform conduct, and his conscientious and undeviating attention to the important duties of the ministry, soon rendered him extremely popular:—And even many of the rich and honourable frequently attended his preaching.

About this time, his intimate friend, Mr. John Nelson, had a remarkable dream: He thought he saw Mr. Bramwell standing on the top of a very high ladder, which appeared to be elevated in a perpendicular direction, its base resting on the ground; but it was without any support or stay at its summit. From this, Mr.

Nelson inferred, that Mr. Bramwell was placed in a most perilous situation. He immediately wrote and informed him of the dream; and by way of caution, added, that he appeared in that dream "to have mounted as high as he could get." "Yes," replied Mr. Bramwell, when he answered his letter, "but did you see me fall?"

For the information of those persons who may express some surprise at the popularity which Mr. Bramwell gained in the early part of his ministry, and which attended him to the close of his life,—it is necessary to state, that he was a man who strictly observed the twelve RULES, which are given in "The Large Minutes," respecting the office and duty of a Methodist preacher. He was one of those primitive HELPERS in whom Mr. Wesley delighted, and who carry with them the unction, life and power of godliness.

The following most important rules Mr. Bramwell particularly regarded: they were the guides of his conduct, yet always in subordination to the Holy Scriptures. He viewed them indeed as an exposition of several scriptural directions; and valued them highly, on account of their salutary consequences.

"Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never WHILE away time, nor spend more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

"Be serious. Let your motto be, *Holiness to the Lord.* Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

"Believe evil of no one unless fully proved: take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction you can on every thing. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

"Speak evil of no one; else YOUR word, especially, would eat as doth a canker: keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.

"Tell every one what you think wrong in him, lovingly and plainly, and as soon as may be, else it will fester in your own heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

"Do not affect the gentleman. A preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.

"Be ashamed of nothing but sin, no, not of cleaning your own shoes, when necessary.

"Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them, and that for conscience' sake.

"You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most.

"Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel, and in union with your brethren. As such, it is your part to employ your time as our rules direct; partly in preaching and visiting from house to house: partly in reading, meditation and prayer.

"Observe: It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care merely of this or that society: but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord."

Early rising was also a point on which Mr. Wesley uniformly insisted. He required it of every one that became a helper.

These rules did not lie inactive in Mr. Bramwell's mind, as a dead letter: he practised them, because he conceived they were the specific terms of his admission into the Christian ministry; and he could esteem himself a true Methodist HELPER no longer than while he acted agreeably to their spirit and intent. In the character which he acquired of being a strict disciplinarian, it was evident that the greatest severity was exercised on himself, and that the law by which he had to govern others, was, in its execution, a system of real mildness.

Who does not perceive that he who adheres conscientiously to these, and similar directions, must be a pious and useful character? Such was Mr. Bramwell!

By a constant observance of these excellent regulations, he became "a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, being prepared unto every good work," 2 Tim. ii, 21. Into whatever circuit he went, the people immediately perceived, from the zealous manner in which he discharged the duties of his sacred calling, that he considered the work of the ministry to be no trifling occupation. The simplicity of the method "by which it hath pleased God, in his infinite wisdom, to save them that believe," excited his admiration. And however it might be stigmatized, in the view of human wisdom, as "the foolishness of preaching,"—he felt in himself, and perceived in others, that the declaration of "CHRIST CRUCIFIED," universally proved to be "CHRIST *the* POWER *of God and the* WISDOM *of God.*" Having these just views of the divinely appointed means of salvation, he meditated on the things which related to his labours; and adopted those plans which he deemed best calculated to render them efficient and acceptable. He endeavoured truly to make it

All his business here below
To cry, BEHOLD THE LAMB!

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Bramwell's labours and success in the Birstal circuit—A great revival — Answers to prayer — Reflections on this revival.

MR. BRAMWELL was appointed, in the year 1793, to labour in the Birstal circuit. A revival of the work of God had commenced in the preceding year, under the ministry of Messrs. Jackson and Smith. On his entrance into this circuit, he did not use any extraordinary public efforts, but prayed much in private, sometimes whole nights, and exhorted every one in society to adopt the same practice. These nights were occasionally spent in intercessions before the mercy seat of God, in behalf of certain individuals,

for whose spiritual welfare he felt an uncommon concern.

At the love feast on Christmas day, 1793, the Lord poured out his Spirit in a very remarkable manner. Many persons were clearly awakened, and not less than fifty souls "obtained redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of sins." Some of these "continued faithful unto death," and have long ago "received a crown of life;" and others are "pressing towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

His colleague could not endure the apparent confusion which was frequent on these occasions. He therefore thought it his duty to oppose the revival, and his conduct influenced the leaders, who for a time maintained a cautious reserve and kept at a great distance, not knowing what judgment to form about these strange proceedings. One of the most judicious of them, (Mr. Thomas Crowther, of Gomersal,) declares the change of his sentiments, thus: "In the love feast on Christmas day, I had such a conviction that this work was of God as caused me immediately to close in with it, and to give it, not only my approval, but my hearty co-operation. When I came out of the chapel on that day, several of the leaders gathered around me, and asked me what I still thought about it. I replied, 'We have long been praying for a revival of religion, and now when it is granted to us, shall we be dissatisfied, and oppose its progress, because it does not exactly accord with our weak ideas, and does not manifest itself in the particular manner in which we expected it?'" From this time all the leaders joined heartily with Mr. Bramwell in the work, and their united labours were crowned with abundant success. In the Birstal society alone, six leaders are now living, who were converted during the revival, under Mr. Bramwell's ministry; independently of many other leaders belonging to different societies in the circuit, who obtained, at the same time, "like precious faith" with them.

The next love feast, held on Easter Sunday, was also a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord: other fifty souls were "turned from darkness to light."

About this time an extraordinary influence went forth and began to manifest itself among the people. Persons of every rank attended the preaching of the word; all the chapels, and the private houses appropriated to the purposes of divine worship, were exceedingly crowded.

It was customary with Mr. Bramwell when in the country, to visit the different families of his hearers, and pray with each of them. In company, he constantly endeavoured to redeem the time by the most profitable exercises. He would not converse on trifling subjects; but the most common theme of his discourse was, "What shall we do to praise the Lord more, to promote his glory, and obtain greater blessings?" His sermons were attended with such mighty power, that several persons were generally in distress before the conclusion of the service. After preaching he often desired those who felt disposed, to stop and unite with him in holding a prayer meeting: so that, in general, it was ten or eleven o'clock at night before they left the chapel.

When opportunities offered, he occasionally held watch nights in the circuit in private houses. In one held at Little Gomersal, there appeared to be nothing particular at the beginning. At ten o'clock Mr. Bramwell was about to conclude; but he commenced again and continued engaged in prayer until twelve o'clock. At that hour he still felt unwilling to break off, and like Jacob, said in his heart,

> With thee all night I mean to stay,
> And wrestle till the break of day!

In a short time a young woman cried aloud for mercy; several more were soon after in deep distress: and before four o'clock in the morning, fifteen souls enjoyed a sense of pardon, and were made glad in the God of their salvation. At another watch night held

in Hunsworth Lane, about the same time, there were many souls saved. Those meetings were frequent in several parts of the circuit, and were always attended with a manifest blessing.

After preaching at Morley one evening, he went into a friend's house to pray for a person in distress, and continued praying for the space of two hours. All that were present prayed in rotation more than once; but he prayed alternately with every one that engaged in the exercise. While he and his friends were thus employed, a young man, a stranger to the Methodists, who was passing by, heard them, and approached the door to listen: he was immediately seized with conviction, fell down on his knees, and, after remaining out of doors in that situation some time, entered the house and knelt down. He was seen to tremble exceedingly, and soon afterwards fell down on the floor; he did not however lie long in that situation, but arose and began to praise God for pardoning his iniquities, and giving him to enjoy the light of his reconciled countenance.

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed," that at the close of Mr. Bramwell's labours in this circuit, the number in society was doubled; without mentioning the multitude of those who were still under serious impressions, but had not united themselves in church fellowship,—and others who were in that state of probation which is usually observed in the economy of Methodism, prior to their admission into all its privileges.

The following simple narrative, by Mr. Thomas Pearson, sen., of Gomersal, affords some farther details of this work of God in that village.

"In the year 1793, at the commencement of the late war, a day was appointed by government to be set apart for fasting and prayer; in consequence of which, prayer meetings were held in our village. Religion was at that time at a very low ebb. The first meeting was held at our house in the morning. Many attended; and no sooner had we commenced the service than the

power of God manifestly affected the assembly. I had been chosen a leader about four months before. We had only seven members in the class; and but five of them could be termed real members. Mr. Jackson was then in the circuit. The work gradually revived till conference; and our class increased to about twenty-seven.

"At this time Mr. Bramwell was appointed to labour among us. He had been the year before in Dewsbury, where God had abundantly owned his labours. He came to us full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. His powerful preaching and fervent prayers were so mighty through faith, that the stoutest hearted sinners trembled under him. Before that time we had a partial outpouring; but a mighty shower then descended, and the truth and power of God wonderfully prevailed. My class soon increased to sixty members; and all ranks and degrees of men began to attend the preaching. Every place of worship in the neighbourhood was crowded. Young persons only ten years of age, were clearly awakened, and savingly converted. This had such an effect upon their parents, that many of them also were awakened. The revival was esteemed by many to be extraordinary and singular: some thought the work was of God, and others that it was too enthusiastic. But it often happened, when the persons who had imbibed the latter opinion went to hear for themselves, the Divine power affected them, and they were constrained to cry aloud to God for mercy. Every man that held any office among us, entered heartily into the work and performed his duty.

"When Mr. Bramwell preached at Gomersal, he generally remained all night at our house. As soon as dinner was over, it was his constant practice to pray in the family, and then to visit the neighbours from house to house. In this way he generally called on seventeen or eighteen different families before tea, and prayed in each of them with the utmost fervour. I was accustomed to invite a few of our friends, whose chief desire was to have their souls blessed, to take tea with Mr.

Bramwell in the afternoon. Affectionate inquiry was then made into the state of each person's mind. They who had not received the blessing of justification, were urged not to rest until they had obtained it; and they who were justified not to rest until they were sanctified, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus. After supper, he and I conversed some time about the affairs of the church at large; he then prayed and retired to rest. Although Mr. Bramwell was greatly fatigued with the work of the day, and, when at our house, went to bed late, (generally about twelve o'clock,) he always rose the next morning at five, and prayed for particular persons by name, and for every society throughout the circuit.

"I have been acquainted with many pious and holy persons, but one like Mr. Bramwell, for faith and prayer, I never beheld. While he continued with us, the work went on progressively, and there was such an alteration throughout the circuit as was never before witnessed."

While Mr. Bramwell was attending the district meeting in Leeds, he accompanied Mr. John Nelson one evening to Kirkstall Forge, and preached out of doors to a large and attentive congregation. When the service was closed, a great part of the company retired into the chapel to hold a watch night. The Spirit of God was poured out, and many were awakened. While at prayer the next morning, a female in the family where he lodged, who had a great aversion against being converted in a noisy meeting, felt the power of God descend upon her; but endeavouring to stifle her convictions, she fell down upon the floor, and remained four hours in a state of *apparent insensibility*, so that many said she was dead. However, on giving up her own will, and yielding to be saved in God's way, she revived, and was made happy.

During his residence in Birstal, many of those who had profited under his ministry in Dewsbury, called on him and consulted him as an old and well tried friend. Indeed, all who had once proved the kindness and

affection of his sympathizing spirit, accounted it a great advantage to unburden their minds in his presence. His counsel was not confined to spiritual things; but, when desired, he gave them the most judicious advice respecting their temporal affairs. On these occasions he always closed the interview by fervent prayer to God in behalf of the persons who were present, mentioning particularly the things about which he had been consulted, whether they related to the soul or the body.

Among others who often availed themselves of this privilege, Mr. Thomas Jackson, who is a woollen-cloth manufacturer and a local preacher in the Dewsbury circuit, observes:

"One Tuesday morning as I was going to Leeds market, I called upon Mr. Bramwell at Birstal. Our trade was at that time in a state of great depression. I had many goods on hand in the cloth hall, and was not able during many weeks to dispose of a single piece. I related these circumstances to Mr. Bramwell. Feeling much for my situation, he said, *Thomas, let us pray!* We knelt down together; and he prayed with such holy fervency, and such expressions of confidence in God, as I shall not soon forget. He spoke in faith, as if it had been actually revealed to him that my help was at hand. I set off from his house, and pursued my journey to Leeds, endeavouring all the way to believe what the man of God had uttered in prayer. My faith gained strength by reflecting on the many gracious declarations which God had given in his word concerning his care for the bodies of his people, and his supply of their wants. I soon found him to be the God of providence as well as of grace: for I had not been more than a quarter of an hour at my stand in the cloth hall, before a merchant, with whom I had never before traded, came up to me and purchased all the goods which I had on hand. This answer to prayer proved to me, at that period, a most seasonable relief, and has encouraged me ever since to confide in the provident goodness of my heavenly Father.

"I know several extraordinary instances of answers to Mr. Bramwell's prayers. Take the following:—One day when he was at our house, a local preacher came in haste to request that he would instantly return with him and pray with a gentleman, who was then extremely ill and apparently in the article of death, yet altogether unprepared for such an awful change. I united my pressing solicitations with those of the messenger, to induce him to go; but, after all our reasoning and entreaties, we could not prevail. Seating himself in a thoughtful posture, he appeared for a short time to be in a state of mental abstraction. He then said, *Let us pray!* and, kneeling down, he prayed in a most powerful manner. Among other strong expressions which he employed, he declared in all the confidence of faith, *O Lord! we believe thou wilt save the gentleman about whom we have been talking!*—The local preacher retired; and, I own my surprise was great when a few days afterwards, I was told that the gentleman had very soon experienced the pardoning love of God, and had received a *blessed assurance of favour divine.*"

Many of Mr. Bramwell's friends, in their intercourse with him have remarked that he possessed a gift which nearly resembled "the discerning of spirits." His intimate communion, and close walk with God, entitled him to the appellation which was given to Abraham: "He was called the *friend of God.*" When the Lord was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, he said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" It is not, therefore, at all wonderful, if men eminent for piety often find, in more senses than one, that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." Do not those affairs which are termed "common providential occurrences," speak in other language to them than to the rest of mankind? How much clearer then must be their apprehension of spiritual things, since it is peculiarly in these that "God manifests himself unto them, and not unto the world!" The nature of the communion which holy souls enjoy with God, and the

terms of the close relation which subsists between him and them, are not at all times proper subjects of description. The promiscuous disclosure of them is often only "*casting pearls before swine.*" Those who attempt to explain such things, most commonly display a profundity of mysticism, because they are tempted to travel wide of the record which the Scriptures give, and to employ phrases which are not congenial to the simplicity of the gospel.

Some of the gifts which good men receive, may be mentioned to edification, because they are "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Others are of a more particular, a secret kind, and communicated only to chosen souls. They form no subject of instruction to other persons, but seem to be tokens of Divine regard towards the individuals themselves. "A stranger intermeddleth not with" the satisfaction which they convey. Of the latter description was the discernment of the spirits of men, which Mr. Bramwell at times appeared to possess. He was neither accustomed to speak of it in public, nor in the company of friends. Its effects have been frequently noticed; and, indeed, his occasional exercise of it in the presence of others, was the only method by which it ever became visible. Mr. Thomas Jackson, the good man who is the narrator of the preceding anecdotes, gives the first of the following instances, and Mr. Stones, a zealous itinerant preacher, has communicated the others.

"A woman with whom I was well acquainted, and who had been a member of the Methodist society many years, came into our house one day, when Mr. Bramwell was with us. He looked earnestly at her, and said, 'Woman! you are a hypocrite! and if you do not repent and become converted, hell will be your everlasting portion!' He then added, 'I know you will hate me for thus speaking the truth.'—I was amazed at the abruptness of his manner, and the strong language in which he expressed himself; and not the less when I reflected on the person to whom all this had been said,

because I entertained a high opinion of her religious character. But I was soon convinced of the truth of Mr. Bramwell's words; for the poor woman had departed self-condemned and humbled under a consciousness of her guilt. She sent for me late in the evening of the same day, and desired me to pray with her, as she felt herself in great distress of spirit. I found her calling to 'remembrance from whence she had fallen;' she was in a hopeful state of repentance, and desirous of 'doing the first works.' I therefore complied with her request, and poured out my soul before the throne of grace in earnest intercessions. In the course of a few hours, the Lord was pleased to manifest his mercy to her, and by 'his Spirit bare witness with her spirit that she was a child of God.' Her joy was excessive; and she has been often heard to declare, that if she had died in the state of mind in which Mr. Bramwell saw her, she must have been eternally lost."

"One day," says Mr. Stones, "as he and I were going together to visit the sick, we passed a public house, out of which came a man, just as we had got beyond the door. When we had proceeded a little farther, Mr. Bramwell groaned in spirit, and said, 'The Lord have mercy on that man! Do you know who he is?' I replied, 'Yes, sir! Do you?' 'No,' said he, 'but this I know, that he is a perfect infidel.' Dear Mr. Bramwell! said I, do not say so. He replied with increased emphasis, 'I am sure of it! He is a *perfect infidel!*'—It is remarkable, that this very man, to my certain knowledge, was then, and (for aught I know to the contrary) is still, such a character for infidelity and profaneness, as perhaps has not his equal in all Yorkshire, if in the United Kingdom.

"One night as I was preaching at Birstal, a man (who was a stranger to all present,) either in pretence or in reality fell ill, and had to be taken out of the chapel. The account which he afterwards gave of himself was, that he came out of Lancashire, (from Leigh or its vicinity,)—was in search of work,—had had nothing

to eat for three or four days, &c. One of our friends took him home, and gave him a night's lodging. The next morning two of the friends came to me, and expressed a desire to beg something for the relief of the poor man. I immediately headed the subscription list with the small sum which I considered it my duty to give; and they went round the village to obtain what they could from others.

"In the mean time Mr. Bramwell came home out of the circuit. I related the whole affair to him. He wished greatly to see the man himself; and I went with him to the house where the man had lodged during the preceding night. We found him within; for he was waiting to receive the money which the friends were collecting for him before he took his departure. The man very pathetically related his tale of wo to Mr. Bramwell. His account appeared to me to be quite rational, accurate, and ingenuous: it pierced to the bottom of my heart. While the man was rehearsing his troubles, Mr. Bramwell had his eyes closed, and frequently groaned in spirit. At length he lifted up his head and looked at the man with an eye that seemed to pierce him through, and said, 'Tell me! Is there not a bastard child in all this?' The man appeared to be thunderstruck; he began to tremble, faltered in his speech, and at length confessed that he had left home to avoid the payment to an illegitimate child which the law exacted. Mr. Bramwell very faithfully warned him of his sin and danger, and advised him to go home, desist from his evil practices, and turn to God with purpose of heart. The man expressing some reluctance about returning home, Mr. Bramwell threatened to have him taken up as an impostor if he did not leave the town immediately. We watched him out of the town, and were glad that he had gone away without his booty. Mr. B. afterwards assured me, that (to the best of his recollection) he had never seen the man before."

The Revival of Religion, of which a very imperfect detail has been given in this chapter, was felt not only in Birstal, but in all the neighbouring circuits.

Many carnal persons, that had heard wonderful accounts about the individuals who, it was said, "had turned the world upside down," went to Birstal out of curiosity. Their going up was sanctified to numbers of them, who, on their return, could say "with a glad heart and free," "It is good for us to have been there!" They obtained pardon and peace, and "went down to their houses justified," and praising the God of their salvation.

But this great work was as remarkable for the quickening and purifying of believers, as for the awakening and "justifying of the ungodly." The mention of "a clean heart" had been, to several of their incredulous minds, a sound as of one that "brought certain strange things to their ears." They were, however, inclined to go up in the character of spies; but many of them felt to their comfort that the place which they went to explore was nothing less than a land of Goshen. There they found "a feast of fat things full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well refined." While they were led to pray "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me,"—the answer was given, "I will, be thou clean;" and they departed from that place glorifying God. Great was the multitude of those who at such seasons had joined themselves to the assembly of the faithful, without indulging in any expectation of obtaining a blessing.

But the humble souls, who in the simplicity of their hearts, had gone up "hungering and thirsting after righteousness, were not disappointed or *sent empty away*, but were *filled with the good things*" of the kingdom. These were as the days of "the Son of man;" and long will they be remembered. Many believers now living in the Leeds, Halifax, Bradford, and Huddersfield circuits, refer to that period as to the time of their espousals to Christ. The Holy Spirit wrought powerfully. Faith was in lively exercise both in the preachers and the people. The weapons which they wielded were "not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." The shak-

ing among the dry bones was wonderful; and before Mr. Bramwell left that circuit, such was the extraordinary influence of the Spirit, that while he prophesied to them, they stood up "a goodly multitude, complete." "The bones had come together, sinews and flesh had come upon them, and the skin had covered them above; and the breath had come into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." "This was the LORD's doing; it was marvellous in the eyes of all." The characteristics of this work were so striking, as to convince even the profane that it "was not of men but of God." Very few mockers were found in that circuit. If there were any to whom the following words of St. Paul could apply, they were people who resided at a distance from the scene of these divine operations, and who heard only exaggerated accounts of confusion and noise, and gave no credence to any of the good effects which happily resulted: to them, therefore, it might be said, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish! For I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

Amidst all the fervour of the revival, it was Mr. Bramwell's constant cry, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us; but unto thy name be the glory!" The greatest fear he knew, was lest any of the instruments whom the Lord had honoured by employing them in that cause, should forget their own littleness, and, beginning to think too highly of themselves, should neglect to ascribe all the praise to God, to whom it was entirely due. That sinful man should thus in the slightest degree encroach on the province of God, was an idea most revolting to his grateful spirit. He could not endure the bare contemplation of it; but in all the fervency of holy zeal, he bore his decided testimony against such a presumptuous infringement of the Divine rights, and denounced the man who could audaciously attempt to rob God of his glory. In this way he was the happy instrument of preserving many unwary and aspiring souls from being dashed against the rocks of spiritual

pride. How many have we seen, who, on other occasions than this, (instead of esteeming it an act of unprecedented condescension in God to employ them in executing any of the saving purposes of his grace,)—have reversed the case, and, fancying themselves to be persons of much consequence in the economy of salvation, have actually been brought to think, that, by their trivial deeds they could render the Lord of hosts essential service! To the Messiah of God it appertains, and to him alone, to declare, "Mine arm brought salvation!" while with all humility of soul, it becomes the redeemed of every degree to confess, respecting themselves and others, "We got not the land in possession by our own sword, neither did our own arms save us; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance,—because thou hadst a favour unto us."

He guarded with much jealousy against the rising of this proud feeling in himself; and he was equally anxious to hinder its prevalence in others. If he beheld it even in its budding, he was accustomed to exclaim against it, and to warn every man of its dangerous consequences. For he knew that such a spirit provoked most justly God's indignation and wrath, impeded the blessed work of salvation, destroyed all personal religion in the individuals by whom it was cherished, and brought on all the labours of a minister, "blasting, and mildew, and hail." Without doubt, it is comely and proper to rejoice when sinners are awakened and converted. Such happy occurrences must afford the highest gratification both to the minister whose labours have been honoured with an issue so successful, and to all the faithful in Christ Jesus. For if there "be greater joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance,"—a similar expression of gladness *on earth* cannot be sinful.—But one part of *his* employment who is "the accuser of the brethren," consists in an attempt to attack the unguarded human heart when it is elated with sacred pleasure, and to change this correct and heavenly feeling, into a towering principle of arro-

gance. How needful, therefore, amidst the most sacred delight, to "watch and pray that we enter not into temptation!" We may rejoice, but it ought to be "with trembling" on account of the frailty of our nature.

In all considerable revivals of religion, it has been the objection of worldly men and lukewarm Christians, that numbers "have fallen from their Christian steadfastness, and concerning faith have made shipwreck." This defection has been noticed in particular among youthful professors. But was there ever known a fruitful soil into which the enemy did not attempt to introduce noxious weeds? And he can accomplish this purpose with the greatest secrecy and the best effect, by mixing his tares with the wheat.—Yet the charge, when it is applied to revivals in the Methodist societies, is not so well founded as many persons imagine.

For allow, that in the heat of a revival a youth depraved in his manners is converted. Being made happy by the removal of all condemnation from his mind, in the generous ardour of pious feeling he wishes for all around him to possess the same blessings as those which he enjoys. To effect this, he begins to exhort the careless among his relations, companions, and neighbours, to escape everlasting punishment, by believing on the Lord Jesus. He becomes active in prayer meetings and Sunday schools, and in visiting sick people. His zeal, untempered by knowledge or experience, prompts him soon to engage with all his heart in several public devotional exercises. His religion being a lively principle, does not permit him to indulge in a morbid stillness. Concede likewise that such a young person "having no root in himself sometimes dureth but for a while." Either his pride is hurt and his piety blasted,—or understanding little about the sufficiency of Divine grace and the stratagems of the devil, he is readily enticed from his high tower by "that wicked one," and suffers his love to decline, and his exertions to cease. The previous ardency of this youth's zeal for the glory of God is the cause why his fall is a matter of the

greatest notoriety, and fills the mouth of unbelievers with expressions of triumph.

But let another youth, placid in his disposition and moral in his habits, unite himself with a sedate company of believing people, profess his faith in Christ, evince a change of heart by the fruits of a stricter life, and proceed in his Christian course rejoicing. These good people, having none of the appearance of religious ardour about them, are able, by the sole force of their own still example, to keep their young convert in his proper place,—that is, as a learner. But should he yield to his former worldly spirit, dislike to act from righteous motives, absent himself from many of the divine ordinances, (especially the sacrament of the Lord's supper,) and retain very little even of the form of godliness,—yet as he had never made himself conspicuous in religious matters, and still continues occasionally to associate with the people of God, his fall is scarcely perceptible. By some of his religious friends, the change in his heart is called "a degree of colder feeling;" and those who view it with pain have often *sufficient liberality* to impute it only to "a temporary lukewarmness." During all this time, his outward moral conduct is faultless; and the men of the world, seeing scarcely any difference between the commencement, the carrying on, and the catastrophe, of this work of grace, find in it no manner of reproach, and his fate excites no public animadversion. Yet his defection is as deep as that of the other, though the steps by which he descended are not so palpable and precipitous.

All persons except those who oppose conjecture to experience, will perceive, that this difference is a correct one, with regard to many of the individuals "who draw back to perdition," and that it applies as forcibly, in another respect, to whole communities. For it often happens even in the Methodist connexion, that a zealous, lively people, experience a great increase of members, while another society in the same circuit and at only a short distance, remains stationary. Some of the members of the latter are usually foremost in cen-

soriousness, and mark with a scornful finger how many new converts among their zealous neighbours "have put their hands to the plough, and by looking back, have rendered themselves unfit for the kingdom of God." Such an unhappy occurrence ought to excite within a pious breast, emotions of a different description. But these jaundiced animadverters, who see all things through a perverting medium, commonly forget to take any account of those awakened at the same time, "who still retain their integrity, and are going on to perfection." They never consider, that if all the members of their own body have not "left their first love," they in reality feel little of its animating power. They can calculate with officious avidity, that the lively society has in twelve months lost more members than they have lost in twelve years: but they seldom venture to recollect, that, within the same number of *months*, the very people with whom they institute the comparison, have gained a greater number of hopeful members than their accusers have done in as many *years*.—In a society, therefore, in which "the work of the Lord" remains in nearly a fixed state, the decrease in the number of its members will, in general, be very trifling; while in a neighbouring society, though several may have "fallen from their steadfastness in Christ," yet the increase of stable members is often numerous in a tenfold proportion.

In these observations the greatest allowance is made, as to the numbers of those who fall away; but on a strict scrutiny even into the smallest society in which a revival occurs, it will be generally discovered that Satan and his emissaries have magnified the apostates into four times their actual number. All boasting on the part of discreet members and grave societies being thus effectually excluded, would it not be a more Christian method to lay aside many of their unjust prejudices, and "be willing for a season to rejoice in the light" which they might behold in others? Would not such a course be a great personal benefit to themselves, and bring them into a train for "catching the sacred

flame ?" If they cannot thus submit themselves, let them "be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." The mind of man is too prone to substitute its own previous conceptions of the manner in which God ought to conduct his operations, for the method which he is pleased in his infinite wisdom actually to adopt. Naaman's spirit and address were perfectly *natural* when he said, "Behold I thought, he will surely come out to me. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ?" And the arguments of his servants were inspired by Heaven : they said, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some *great thing*, wouldst thou not have done it ?" Indeed, all God's plans are founded on the abasing of human pride, "that no flesh may glory in his presence." In the admirable process of his grace, "He hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

It would be wrong to close these reflections, without adverting to the case of some "who kept not their first estate" in grace. The provisions for catechumens in the Methodist societies, are probably the best which could be devised by human wisdom under the influence of Divine teaching. Class meetings are real nurseries for all that is lovely and excellent in religion. But it sometimes happens, that they who are placed at the head of them, are so occupied with other departments of the work of God as to forget to feed the lambs of the flock. This is especially the case during a revival. They are like some eager fishermen, who, in their haste to obtain a fresh draught, neglect to secure those fishes which they had previously caught. Other class leaders are competent to build up believers in their most holy faith ; but have not discernment enough to instruct recent converts in "the first principles of the doctrine of Christ," without a knowledge of which all attempts to raise a Christian character must be fruitless. When a young Christian falls into hands like these, he is required, at too early a period of his novitiate, to

bear his part in social prayer, instead of being exhorted to "give attendance to reading." And at the time when he ought "to be swift to hear and slow to speak," his opinion is often asked about church matters or religious doctrines, which should only engage the attention of more advanced disciples. It is in this way that the Bible becomes neglected, ignorance is engendered, and pride fostered. The youth, raw and inexperienced as he is, appears quite conscious that he has a capacity for every thing, and that "he has more understanding than all his teachers." He begins therefore to slight pious instruction; forms rash judgments about "things indifferent," and is not backward in giving them utterance. In the mean time, some good people can see nothing wrong in all this, but consider it a proof of "an independent spirit!" How much more consistent would it be in every Christian to inculcate and encourage "that mind which was also in Christ Jesus," and to which all his followers have this special invitation,—"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am *meek* and *lowly* in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Such a yoke as this "it is good for a man to bear in his youth."

Though these observations apply with much propriety to some young people who forsake the way of peace; yet in many instances they are no less true respecting elder persons, who find themselves placed in similar circumstances after their reception into the fold of Christ. However advanced they may be in years, they are but "as new-born babes;" and from the fixed nature of their former habits, are as liable as younger people to have their "minds corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." It is not peculiar to any period of life for "the dog to turn to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." An injudicious course of instruction, and the baneful infection of froward examples, may cause aged persons to relapse as speedily as their juniors. With less "excuse for their sin," they can be more confident

and dogmatical about many things that have no immediate reference to their salvation; and "having perverted their way," they are too apt "to forget the Lord their God."

Mr. Bramwell therefore never acted more in the character of "a wise master builder," than when he made careful provision for recent converts. By painful experience, he had known, in himself, the pernicious consequences which accrue from a want of early Christian tuition. After he had felt the first gracious visitation of the Holy Spirit, "no man cared for his soul." He had "stumbled about on the dark mountains" till at length he was favoured with "the communion of saints." He was therefore well qualified to appreciate the value of Christian society and pious advice; and adopted measures in every place for ensuring these benefits to all who were admitted within the pale of the Christian church. Directions were given to the most prudent and well informed class leaders, to take special charge of all who evinced a concern for their salvation. They were advised to encourage the timid, and by all gentle methods, to prevent those who were only "girding on their harness, from boasting themselves as they that were putting it off." It was also his practice to meet the converts of each sex separately, to give them appropriate counsel respecting their conduct, point out proper books for their perusal, and to recommend, above all, the constant reading of the Scriptures, and a strict attention to personal religion and private devotion.

When he perceived them observant of these precepts, he invited their attention to the doctrinal works of Wesley and Fletcher. He disliked that wavering humour in religious opinions which some persons have thought fit to dignify with the high sounding title of LIBERALITY. Knowing that superficial attainments in practical piety are too often caused by unsettled notions about religious truth, he introduced to their notice the immortal productions of those two great men, as a complete treasury of needful "erudition for a Christian man." Considering that system of doctrines to be in

perfect agreement with the Scriptures of truth, and admirably adapted to the wants of man, he was induced to dilate on their excellence at every fit opportunity. In this way, he laboured not only to gain converts, but to form Christians and establish believers.

But after all his judicious precautions and laudable anxiety, he was sometimes called to mourn over miserable backsliders. It would have been most wonderful, if, in this respect "the disciple had been above Christ his master," who had one Judas in his select company. Mr. Bramwell was too well acquainted with the constitution of human nature to be amazed at these unhappy occurrences, "as though some strange thing had happened unto him." His compassion was on such occasions powerfully excited, and he earnestly longed to "reclaim and bring these wanderers back." In this department of the work of God, he was uncommonly successful. Several who "did once run well," heard this "son of consolation," and "in the strength of grace," were induced again to commence their Christian career. His addresses, full of affection, were instrumental in their restoration to the favour of God, which they had forfeited. On this account, his memory will long be cherished by many, who, on this topic, "had heard him gladly," and who now adorn their Christian profession by blameless lives, and a holy conversation. He lived to see numbers of returning prodigals, and, in imitation of the paternal compassion of the God of heaven, he ran to meet them, gave them an affectionate welcome, and called on all around to the expression of gladness, because "those who had been dead, were alive again;—those who had been lost were found."

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Bramwell is stationed in the Sheffield circuit—A great revival in that town—His diligence in the work of the ministry—His acquirements and the manner in which they were applied—Reflections on the improvement of time—Anecdotes—Letters.

The conference in 1795 directed Mr. Bramwell to labour in the Sheffield circuit. He was quite unknown to the friends in that town. The reason of this appointment is explained in the following communication by Mr. Henry Longden:

"Early in the year 1794, our revered father in the gospel, Mr. A. Mather, paid a pastoral visit to Sheffield. As he had been twice stationed in this circuit, he knew many pious individuals there, and felt for them an unceasing affection. He had recently visited several circuits in the north of England, where there was a revival of religion and a great increase in the societies; he had there caught the holy flame, and in every place endeavoured with renewed ardour to spread its influence.* In addressing the members of the Sheffield society, he told them 'that in all those places where the Lord had lately poured out his Spirit, it was in answer to earnest prayer. The preachers every where, after the usual services, held prayer meetings; all who could conveniently remain, united to implore a general blessing; and the Lord, who had inspired the desire, granted their requests: it was done according to their faith.' During this visit they had many refreshing seasons together.

"After his departure, Mr. Moon and Mr. Cooper continued to unite, in the same manner, with the people in public prayer. The good seed sown by Mr.

* See Mr. Mather's interesting account of the revival of religion at Hull, in the London Methodist Magazine, vol. xvii, page 603.

Mather soon appeared. On the day of the following midsummer love feast, a shower of reviving, saving, and sanctifying grace descended, and the people were overwhelmed with its influence. A particular account of this great work is found in the London Methodist Magazine, vol. xviii, page 415, written by Mr. Moon.

"In August, 1794, the conference appointed Mr. Blagburn as Mr. Cooper's successor, and in the following year 380 souls were added to the church. These two blessed men were well calculated by their zeal to promote, and by their wisdom to defend, this extraordinary work of the Spirit. The Sheffield people were anxious respecting a successor; and as the conference of 1795 approached, Mr. Mather was requested to recommend, and if possible to procure, 'a man after God's own heart;' one who had witnessed a similar effusion of the Holy Spirit. Mr. Bramwell was sent, an entire stranger to the people, in answer to prayer; and was every where received as an angel of God. The ground was prepared by his excellent predecessors 'to receive the good seed' in some places, and in others 'the fields were already white unto the harvest.'

"The people soon perceived Mr. Bramwell was a man come out from God; his words were accompanied with a divine authority and a gracious unction. In several houses where he lodged, while in the country, his prayers and intercessions were often heard many times during the night. He uniformly left his bed at four in the morning to enter upon the duties of the day; every moment of which was spent in union with God, and in devotedness to the salvation of the people.

"Plenteously anointed with holy oil, he proclaimed the jubilee of the gospel, the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of deliverance to all that believe. As his whole soul was employed in this work of preaching, so he required of his hearers their silent, fixed attention. Children might not disturb; the heart might not slumber, if observed; nor might the eye of an individual wander. When these important preliminaries of usefulness were secured, he directed the mind to wait only

upon God as the great fountain of blessings, and to look to Christ as the only object of faith, 'that with meekness they might receive the ingrafted word which is able to save the soul.'

"Every where he preached 'Christ as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' and faith as the great duty enjoined in the gospel. He showed distinctly the proper subjects of saving faith, and that all such (and such only) as, in obedience to the command of God, attempt to believe, are enabled also to believe and receive instantly the answer of faith, the salvation of the soul; that salvation is wrought by the grace of God, through the exercise of faith; and that, though salvation has unlimited degrees, it has two leading characters, viz. JUSTIFICATION and SANCTIFICATION:—That as we cannot be justified from the guilt of past offences but by faith, so we are sanctified throughout by the exercise of the same faith: that the accomplishment of the promises by faith is always instantaneous; and that such a faith in powerful operation is to be distinguished from that which is a gracious habit of the mind; a faith wherein we stand, and walk, and overcome the world.

"These doctrines Mr. Bramwell urged in almost every sermon; yet he did not exalt them and depreciate others. For as divine truth sweetly harmonizes when seen comprehensively, so he published every doctrine of the gospel, bringing 'out of the treasury things new and old.' To say that he was popular every where is saying very little. While he was engaged in the pulpit, sinners saw their natural face as in a glass, and were deeply affected with a sight of their sinful deformity; professors beheld the awful difference between the form of godliness and the power; and the attention of saints was turned upon themselves as connected with their holy calling. The humble, the broken hearted, the thirsty for God, were encouraged NOW to believe in Christ as a present and all-sufficient Saviour. 'The hand of the Lord was with his servant, and many believed and turned to the Lord.' Under his

awakening appeals, untold numbers have trembled; the veil of ignorance and the mask of hypocrisy were torn away, when the real characters were shown in the light of the gospel. Under his persuasive ministry, many a Lydia's heart was opened, many a bowed spirit transported, and 'shared in the gladness of all that believe.'

"In promoting the work of the Lord, Mr. Bramwell employed the talents of the local preachers, leaders, and other individuals, in prayer; and they became important helpers to him in every place. The embers of love were kindled all around: and when he revisited the societies, he found them 'striving together for the furtherance of the gospel.' Opposition was broken down, lukewarmness was destroyed, a holy union was maintained, and the work of God in the town and country broke out in a flame of life, and power, and zeal. Itinerant and local preachers, with others, have come more than fifty miles in search of the blessing of a clean heart; and joining with him in the holy violence of prayer, have returned, glorifying God for the wonders of his saving power. Wherever he went, visible signs and wonders were wrought in the name of Christ: and in the course of the first year, twelve hundred and fifty members were added to the society! He and his fellow labourers ceased not to remind the class leaders of their responsibility in feeding and guiding the 'church of God which he had purchased with his own blood,' and that they ought to make up the lack of the preachers' service towards all those who were but newly found in Christ.'

"As an overseer of souls, he frequently visited eight or ten families in the early part of the day. These visits were short and spiritual. If possible, he would have the whole family collected, and having ascertained the religious state of them all, he would pray for each by name, and implore blessings suited to their respective necessities. We have often felt on these occasions the influence of his affectionate solicitude, his penetrating look, and his pointed inquiries; and

believe it was in vain for the formalist, the backslider, and the hypocrite, to elude detection by him. The rich and the poor were admonished, growing evils in families destroyed in the bud: parents, children, and servants, taught their proper duty; and all were constrained to assert, respecting our revered friend, 'in labours he was more abundant.'

"When a minister so fully discharges his pastoral office among a numerous people, he is in danger of neglecting the diligent study of the Scriptures, and of making a superficial preparation for the pulpit. Mr. Bramwell, however, was not content to read the inspired volume in his vernacular tongue; but he diligently studied it in the language in which it was written. He manifested no laxness, but evinced that every discourse was the result of much labour. We know that he weighed human opinions contained in commentaries; but he sought for the Divine teaching in all things. And, without controversy, he was an able workman who needed not to be ashamed. The style of his composition was peculiarly his own. We do not know that he had any model set before him. His sentences were generally short and terse, containing much point, calculated to convey instruction and conviction directly to the mind. Sometimes there was a natural and beautiful abruptness elicited from the workings of his soul, which was burdened with the sacred message from God to the people. This has operated as a two-edged sword, penetrating to the centre, and dividing the joints and marrow. He was acquainted with the workings of the heart and the devices of Satan, and studied mankind in *man* as well as in *books*, witnessing in society all its variety of circumstances and fluctuations. This only can account for the adaptation of his sermons to every congregation, and every public or calamitous event; for he 'rightly divided the word of truth, and gave to each a portion in season.'

"Mr. Bramwell delighted to press the people to believe, but he did not omit to inculcate the weighty matters of the law. He recommended a punctual at-

tendance upon the public means of grace, but he would not have any duty neglected at home. He insisted upon the necessity of private prayer, but he would not infringe upon the work of searching the Scriptures. He considered the religion of Christ as an empty name when it was destitute of love; that perfect, powerful, and operative principle, which leads to acts of universal good will to man. He proclaimed, 'Owe no man any thing but love.'

"When we inquire respecting the cause of the almost unparalleled fruits of his labours, we find that truth must be clearly perceived before it can be represented with clearness to others; that it must be felt in the heart of the speaker, before it can impress the heart and arouse the conscience of the hearer. And thus it was: Mr. Bramwell was not only earnest *externally*, but he was *inwardly* and powerfully impressed with the importance of rightly explaining the doctrines and enforcing the precepts of Christ to dying, perishing men, and laboured to be 'clear of the blood of all men.'

"Mr. Bramwell was himself the example of all he recommended. The more intimately his private habits of life were known, the more he was esteemed and venerated. Those who were thus favoured, breathed in his society a heavenly atmosphere, and acknowledged a peculiar influence to accompany all his conversation. They admired the correctness of his principles of action, which were conformed to the precepts of the gospel: they saw that 'in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world, and more abundantly towards them.'

"He saw the possibility, that, 'after having preached to others, himself might become a castaway.' By stated fasting, by constant watchfulness, by habitual temperance in all things, he kept the body in subjection, and thereby increased his spirituality and power.

"In nothing did he approach more nearly to an imitation of our Lord, than in his benevolence. It cannot be thought singular that he was courteous, and pitiful,

and kind; for all the ministers of the gospel ought to exemplify these virtues. But he relieved the necessities of others, by making frequent sacrifices of his own personal comfort. We have known him give his only top coat in severe weather to one who had not a coat; nor would he spare the garments of his beloved wife for the relief of persons in extreme distress. On another occasion, while visiting a sick man, who was in extreme want and lying in bed without a shirt, Mr. Bramwell retired into a private room, took off his own shirt, and gave it to the poor man. He was indeed a good Samaritan; he considered every suffering child of Adam as his brother or his sister, as flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, whom Christ had loved unto death; and therefore having a claim for his utmost efficient help. When there was any doubt in the case of applicants he would ascertain the reality and extent of suffering by personal investigation, and has administered to their wants, property, food, or medicine, with his counsel, sympathy, and prayers. Often has he been 'help in need,' a ministering angel of mercy both to the afflicted body, the broken spirit, and the despairing mind. When therefore he enforced the most difficult and least palatable duties of religion, the people did not inwardly respond, 'Physician, heal thyself.'

"'Thus by the space of three years he ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears, and to teach every man that he might present every man perfect before God.'"

Another valuable correspondent gives the subjoined account of those glorious days!

"When Mr. Bramwell was announced as the preacher appointed for Sheffield, there was a degree of expectation excited in the society, that the Lord would come and revive the work of divine grace by his instrumentality. Mrs. Cooper had been very useful in the conversion of many individuals, and had provoked a spirit of prayer and exertion that had been blessed of God. Of the number of those that had been brought to God, was Mr. Edward Miller, and a few others, who

seemed prepared to enter into a revival, and to second it with all their powers. Mr. Bramwell was no sooner heard than the genuine power was experienced. A kind of electric sensation was felt in the whole society. Present effects were looked for, and present effects were received. The clearness of justification and sanctification were decidedly and constantly preached. A *present enjoyment* of both of them was so ardently pressed, so unceasingly offered by faith, and faith alone, to be received, felt, and enjoyed *now*,—that the whole circuit seemed soon to catch the flame. Seventeen or eighteen hundred persons, in the two years, were joined to the society. Entire sanctification was pressed upon believers as their undoubted right. They were constantly pressed into the enjoyment of it, and numbers professed to enter into the possession of that state, and brought forth all its precious fruit.

"From various parts of England people arrived to judge of the truth of this work. Many were strongly opposed to the mode in which it was carried on, and violently objected to it; but they were so overcome by the spirit of the labourers and the effect of the revival, that they repeatedly acknowledged their full conviction of its being a genuine and undoubted work of the Spirit of God.

"Mr. Bramwell's labours were abundant. Possessed of a strong body and a powerful voice, he never seemed to be exhausted; but unwearied in his work, he gave consistency and stability to the whole!

"At length a division took place in the society, and 'separated very friends.' Spirits the most united no longer associated together; and individuals who had formerly been as brethren, viewed the acts of each other with aversion.

"How must the lovers of Zion lament, that in every revival of God's work, there are certain evils intermixed, that seem to say, 'Thus far shall you go, and no farther!' Well! the time will come, when godliness in its power will prevail, when Jew and Gentile will unite, when the omnipotence of Jesus will win or blast

all his enemies, when he shall establish his kingdom, give victory to his saints, and reign over all for ever and for ever! 'Amen! Amen! So come, Lord Jesus!' is the hope and cry of every true believer.

"One of the most constant effects of Mr. Bramwell's residence in any place, was 'the spirit of prayer.' Such a general spirit of zealous prayer as he encouraged, was never experienced before in Methodism. Strong desires for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom, for the destruction of sin, for the advancement of holiness, and for the glory of the latter days, were felt and breathed out by numbers. They were answered by the Spirit of God, diffusing his own blessing and sealing the truth by his own power, so that the most sanguine hopes were entertained by the faithful, that great and glorious consequences would be produced, and would extend through the Christian and Heathen world. If these effects have not been so generally felt and so widely spread as some expected,—yet blessed have been the consequences: justification and sanctification by faith only, have been preached and experienced to be the truth of God by the Spirit's divine application, 'sealing the believer to the day of redemption,' and witnessing with his own divine testimony to the truth.

"Mr. Bramwell preached *a present and a full salvation* through faith in the Redeemer's blood; and thousands will have to praise God in eternity that ever they heard from his lips the sound of such a gospel. On the entire destruction of sin and the complete renewal of the heart in holiness, he preached decidedly: this was his constant, his favourite theme. To be cleansed from all sin, to be perfected in love, was the grand object of his preaching, and the constant experience of his heart. Never did he preach with more energy, never did a greater divine unction attend his word, than when he pressed the Christian, the Methodist doctrine of entire sanctification from all sin, the utter destruction of all inbred evil, and the restoration of the whole soul to the image of God! In this Mr.

Bramwell was faithful to God and to the Scriptures, and showed all good fidelity to the souls over whom he watched, and whom he wished to present perfect before God, and cleansed from all unrighteousness! The author of this account knew, that Mr. Bramwell held this sentiment and felt this experience for twenty-three years before he died; and he believes that he was never conscious of enjoying it more sensibly, and never expressed himself on this subject more clearly, than a few days before he expired.

"A select band that met early in the morning, once a week, consisting of Messrs. Longden, Miller, Wilkinson, Levick, and the itinerant preachers, was made an uncommon blessing. In that meeting the public and private conduct of every individual passed through a fiery ordeal. Their holiness in private, and their spirit and carriage in public, were severely and faithfully scrutinized. They were guarded equally against intemperate, unchristian zeal, and against lukewarm formality. Their whole conduct underwent a severe examination, while they were excited to the most zealous exertion, and cautioned against any excess which could not be warranted by the word of God.

"The attempts of the enemy to defile the purity of the work, by bringing forward improper characters, mixing false fire with the true flame, or by disparaging the work in any other way, were most assiduously prevented. His stratagems were perceived, and his designs defeated. Never, perhaps, was there a work that could better withstand the opposition of the wicked, or calm the apprehensive fears of the faithful, than the revival at Sheffield. If its fruits were not spread through the world, we can only say the time is not yet come, when righteousness shall fill the globe, and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the whole earth. But these lively specimens animate the true believer; they give a degree of assurance to his hopes; they afford a ground of dependence on the truth of Almighty God; and virtually announce, that 'the kingdoms of this

world shall become the kingdoms of Christ,' and that he shall for ever reign with his saints."

In the preceding extract, the reader will have noticed the slight allusion made to Mr. Killham's secession from the parent connexion. Mr. Bramwell's feelings on that occasion, have been variously represented. But the best mode of forming a judgment of a man, is to hear how he unbosoms himself to his intimate friends. On this subject Mr. Bramwell's views will be correctly ascertained, by his expressions at the close of the following letter. Unlike many warm souls at that period, "he lived above the division, and waited the event in peace." As a Christian minister, he accounted it indecorous in him to "speak evil of any man." This letter, being the first of the series which is intended to be inserted in this work, is printed according to Mr. Bramwell's own method of punctuation. It will be perceived that he delighted in the frequent use of the dash, and employed it on all occasions.

LETTER I.

To Doctor Taft.

"Sheffield, November 1st, 1797.

"My Dear Brother,—I should have written to you immediately, but expected Messrs. Miller and Wilkinson would have come to see you, as I had a promise from them. They are prevented at present by business. I rejoice in your union and prosperity. I bless the Lord for his goodness to the little flock. He cares for you—and will help you.—I trust your own soul prospers more and more.—There is a work for every day.—The Lord waits to impart more of his love,—and will give more to the hungry.—Oh my brother Taft! give yourself to him in much prayer and faith, keep yourself as much as possible composed—let not little things dissipate your thoughts.—Be fixed in God.—The world will tempt and seek to draw you;—but

your work is for God—for heaven—for glory.—O run the race! fight the battle! conquer through the blood! I believe you will receive the crown. If you are not called to preach—or exhort—or teach, you are called to live—to pray—to walk with God.—Fear not!—salvation will come!—Wait for all he has to give—

> Wait to prove his utmost will,
> And have your heaven about you still.

"I am seeking the Lord every day. I am sure I grow in grace.—This is my labour—to see God—and love him.—My union is stronger than when I was with you.—I have left all in his hands.—I have no care but to please him.—'I am dead—and my life is hid with Christ in God.'—I am more dependent than ever,—see myself more and more—and can only say, 'Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'—Oh the mind, the sweet mind of Christ! May I follow the Lord every moment!—I see the work deepen among his people; and for some weeks have seen souls saved nearly every day, less or more.

"I live above the division—and wait the event in peace. The will of God be done—not mine! When all are humbled—we, I trust, shall shake hands—and all give glory to God. I feel much compassion—my bowels yearn for all men—and I can speak evil of none.—

"I am your affectionate brother in Christ,

"Wm. Bramwell."

These are the expressions of a mind filled with charity, and desirous of peace. They display Mr. Bramwell's amiable character to advantage. He "felt much compassion," and his "bowels yearned for all men," even for those who had separated from communion with him. Some of his more zealous friends, who manifested much displeasure on this occasion, expected him to be as warm as themselves. But he remembered, that "the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if

God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil."

Mr. Bramwell's zeal for the Lord of hosts, his utter indifference to mere secular concerns, and his well tried prudence, engaged the affections of the people, and caused the conference of 1797 to honour him by a third year's appointment. His colleagues were Mr. James Wood and Mr. Pipe, men who enjoyed his confidence, and with whom he became very closely united. Under their skilful administration, the society was kept in a state of comparative tranquillity, amidst much outward perplexity and many incentives to disquietude. The work of conversion and sanctification did not cease; but the walls of Jerusalem continued to be built, even in those troublous times.

Mr. George Smith was that year stationed at Ashby de la Zouch, and had heard wonderful things about the revival at Sheffield. Having been long in search of the blessing of sanctification, he resolved to go to the place where it was reported many others had received it. He accordingly set out for Sheffield in company with Messrs. Crawson, Shakespeare, and Keecher.—They arrived early on Saturday, and repaired in the evening to the band meeting, in Norfolk street chapel. Messrs. Bramwell, Pipe, Longden, and Miller, were present: and while they and other able witnesses gave a clear and scriptural account of the manner in which they received the gift of sanctification, the strangers, (Mr. G. Smith and his friends,) were much affected. Mr. Miller perceived it; and going up to Mr. Smith, inquired who he was. When he had been told, he said, "Here is a travelling preacher, who is come to Sheffield, and has brought three of his friends with him, above seventy miles, for the purpose of receiving 'a clean heart.'" He exhorted all the faithful to lift up their hearts in behalf of these earnest and sincere seekers. They began to pray for them; when Mr. Smith was so overwhelmed with the power of the Highest, as instantly to "enter into the sanctifying

rest, which remains for the people of God." He then adopted the advice which our Lord gave on a different occasion to Peter—"And thou, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." He united in prayer for those whom he had brought with him; and while in the act of entreating "the very God of peace to sanctify them wholly," and that their whole spirit, and soul, and body, might be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord spake the word, and they were made partakers of the blessing. "Being cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, they were enabled to perfect holiness in the fear of God." On returning homewards, "their hearts burned within them while they talked" of this great salvation. Two of them (Messrs. Shakespeare and Crawson,) died in the following year, enjoying all the glorious fruits of this sanctification. The other two are yet living, and "stand fast in the same liberty wherewith Christ had made them free."

Mr. Parker, of Woodhouse Grove, makes the following remarks on Mr. Bramwell's character and conduct:—

"My acquaintance with Mr. Bramwell was occasioned by my removal, about May, 1798, to Sheffield, where he had then been above two years stationed. At that time there was a remarkable revival, of the extent of which some judgment may be formed when it is observed, that at a single love feast about one hundred persons were convinced of the necessity of 'working out their own salvation with fear and trembling.' During the continuance of this extraordinary enlargement of the work of grace, Mr. Bramwell's instrumentality was so singularly blessed of Him whose peculiar province it is to give the increase, that I cannot deem it irrelevant to enlarge on a topic that proved to be highly interesting and profitable to thousands, and in which Mr. Bramwell himself was eminently concerned. In addition to many others, amongst whom are two persons since called to the itinerant ministry, I was myself an eye and ear witness of those glorious seasons which

will remain deeply imprinted on my recollection to the latest period of my existence. We might on this subject truly say, 'that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, declare we unto you.'—Certainly if ever I knew or experienced pentecostal seasons, (those gracious and abundant manifestations of the Spirit which no language can describe,) it was at that time, when, if not thousands, at least hundreds, were added to the church; many of them, I doubt not, such as shall be eternally saved. The arrows of conviction fastened on many; conscience did its office; the sword of the Spirit pierced 'between the joints and the harness;' Gallios became serious: and before the presence of Jehovah, the stout-hearted bowed the stubborn knee, and rocks of impenitence flowed into streams of penitential sorrow.

"The angels of God, we are informed, rejoice over one sinner that repenteth; but here they had to rejoice over hundreds. And they were assuredly there, rejoicing in our midst. Many besides myself will never forget the day when that hymn was sung at Garden-street chapel, which begins with

> Angels now are hovering o'er us,
> Unperceived they mix the throng, &c.

For if ever I was conscious (as far as a human spirit can be,) of the presence of supernatural powers, that was the time. Many felt and possessed unutterable things. It seemed that there was but a thin veil between us and the invisible world, and that Satan, for a season, was bound in chains, and the church militant admitted into the presence chamber of the Majesty on high. The strong holds of Satan fell, like Dagon before the ark. Many were pressing through the strait gate, into that kingdom which is 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' And it was as though angels themselves attended to write the names of believers in the Lamb's book of life. But whether angels

were there or not, of one thing I am persuaded, that heaven was there; for

My Jesus to know,
And feel his blood flow,
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below.

"How often was the large floor of Norfolk-street chapel to be seen clustered over with little groups around a wrestling Jacob! and when he halted a little on his thigh, how ready were many to administer the word of consolation, how ready to join in prayer that shook the pillars of hell, and opened the gates of heaven!

"That Mr. Bramwell was in an eminent degree a man of prayer, I have been frequently assured by my own personal observation. Seldom have I called upon him, but it was easy to perceive, from the devotion which he breathed, and the heavenly mindedness which marked his manner and conversation, that 'he had been with Jesus.'

"It has been my lot to mark Mr. Bramwell's very exemplary conduct in the social circle. And in this respect, I must affirm that I never met with his equal. His conversation was eminently such as 'tended to minister grace to his hearers.' It was his aim in company, to direct his conversation and that of his friends to one point,—and that was a PRESENT and a FULL salvation. Throughout the whole, he maintained the most jealous and vigilant eye lest the discourse should in the least diverge towards topics not equally definite and important. Nor was he contented with this: it was not long before this man of God, and the company with whom he was engaged, fell on their knees and wrestled in prayer, till

The op'ning heavens around them shone
With beams of sacred bliss.

"One particular instance of this, I will here relate: In consequence of being at the London conference in 1804, I frequently met with Mr. Bramwell. On one occasion, he desired me to meet him in the afternoon, at a friend's house in the city. On entering the house, the voice of devotion saluted my ear. Mr. Bramwell

and the rest of his friends engaged successively in fervent social prayer. At tea, he ruled the conversation, so that not a sentence concerning politics, the common topics of the day, the foibles of the neighbourhood, or any indifferent subject was permitted to transpire. The attention of the company was directed exclusively to the great concerns of their present and eternal salvation. It was not long before a person present advanced something irrelevant to the single aim which this man of God held so tenaciously in view; but he suppressed it immediately by exclaiming, 'Now we are wandering from the point again!' After conversation on the best subjects had continued for some time, the company again joined in fervent prayer until the preaching hour arrived, and importunately pleaded for the realization of the great blessings which had occupied their attention.

"I am particular about the mention of this trait in Mr. Bramwell, because, (in common with many who profess the influence of the fear and love of God,) I have experienced great difficulty in ordering a conversation aright, so that each person might be enabled to say, at the close of an interview, that he had imbibed a greater aversion to sin, and a more ardent thirst after holiness. When this is not the result, have we not reason to fear that either we, or the persons with whom we have conversed, are in some degree fallen from our first love,—from the life, the power, and the pleasures of godliness? It is truly lamentable to notice the great degeneracy that prevails in the conversation of those who are only *nominally* religious in the present day. Some are content to while away every golden hour with subjects of a mere worldly nature. Some have outridden every profitable purpose to which the legitimate use of anecdotes can be applied, and hale in a number of tales of a facetious or ludicrous nature, the only end of which is to excite merriment and levity. These are far worse than the 'old wives' fables' against which St. Paul warns Timothy. But, says Cowper,

> 'Tis pitiful to court a grin,
> When you should woo a soul.'

"Those who go about to destroy the souls of others and their own, by their rage for telling anecdotes, do not generally let the bare recital suffice. To secure their pitiful and ignoble end, and to give *effect* to their stories, they do not hesitate to give what is called 'a little additional colouring;' and in this way both truth and modesty are too often sacrificed. The politeness of the hearer obliges him to digest the lies and indelicacies at which his sober judgment recoils; 'while demons laugh unseen, at fools that ape the faults of human kind.' In the hearing of such persons a serious subject can scarcely be mentioned, but with impertinent levity they endeavour to turn it into ridicule. This the world calls 'wit;' and the miserable buffoon who utters it passes for 'an agreeable companion.' But does not such an unhappy qualification prove him to be one of the agents of the nether region, a bird of the way-side to pluck up the tender seed out of the hearts of the sincere and simple, and a tool of Satan to efface every good impression?

"Christianity, be it observed, does not exclude cheerfulness. Christian cheerfulness consists in that serene and tranquil peace, that hope blooming full of immortality, that sacred joy in the Holy Ghost, which

> Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,
> And opens in each breast a little heaven.

"I may be censured for this long digression from the history of Mr. Bramwell. But it appears to me, that the most advantageous purpose achieved by the biographic page, is that of pointing out in what respects the works of good men may be said to follow them with profit to survivors. Perhaps one of the most lively and impressive comments, that we can possibly receive from man on that prescriptive code, the Bible, is the illustration of its doctrines, the fulfilment of its promises, and the exemplification of its obligations, as displayed either in the living characters, or by the biographic record. Considered in this light, my digression may, I think, be justified.

"I shall beg leave here to mention a circumstance

which occurred in Sheffield, and which is consistent with this feature in Mr. Bramwell's character. In consequence of certain persons in the principal street exhibiting at their shop windows prints and caricatures, many of which were of a ludicrous or an indelicate description, Mr. Bramwell warned his congregations of the evil and impropriety of allowing the mind to be diverted or corrupted by imagery of this kind. He blamed serious persons for stopping a moment to view such prints; and told them, that when he found a print of this sort hung up in a friend's house, he did not forget to give him a suitable reproof by turning the front of it to the wall.*

"The life and zeal which shone in Mr. Bramwell, kept him at the utmost distance from formality. Instead of being content during divine service, with the ordinary routine of singing and praying once before and once after the sermon, after having prayed at the close of preaching, he usually called on two or three persons to unite with him in supplication. At other times, whilst he was yet on his knees, and in the midst of his prayer, he would break forth into singing, in which he was immediately joined by the congregation. To me it appeared singularly solemn to see a whole congregation and their preacher singing in that suppliant posture. By such methods as these, the resolutions

* I cannot omit to relate a custom which I have ever admired in the late Bible Christian, the Rev. Mr. Rutherford. The daughters of that pious minister had from time to time wrought in needlework a variety of very important and apposite texts of Scripture, illustrative of its leading doctrines: Except two or three portraits of pious men, these were the only pictures that ornamented the walls of his dwelling. Whenever a stranger was admitted, or kept a few moments in waiting till Mr. R. could attend to him, there was scarcely a point of the parlour wall that did not preach to him a wholesome biblical lecture. I once turned for a moment to one of these silent monitors, and read, "Lean not to thine own understanding; but in all thy ways acknowledge HIM, and HE shall direct thy paths." This truth has, more or less, followed me ever since. I have found in it the cause of many of the mistakes which I have made in life, and the rule by observing which I might have avoided a thousand sorrows.

and impressions produced by the sermon were rendered, in many cases, much more effectual.

"From these several circumstances, therefore, we cannot wonder that it pleased the great Head of the Church to crown Mr. Bramwell's ministry with an abundant blessing. The writer of these lines is specially entitled to indulge in this sentiment: for, after a season of the deepest sorrow, as Mr. Bramwell was preaching at Norfolk-street chapel, the Lord was pleased to whisper peace to him who makes this communication. From that time 'the powers of the world to come' shone brighter and brighter, till he was enabled to witness, with full assurance, (yea, if needful, before assembled worlds,) that he 'had not followed cunningly devised fables.' He could then 'rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' But he was not a solitary instance; for it was then by no means uncommon for those who had been present at such seasons of refreshment, to return home with the joyful tidings that many were born in Zion, without being able accurately to number those who were brought into that glorious liberty. While some were able to witness (by the Spirit of adoption, crying, '*Abba, Father!*') that God for Christ's sake had blotted out as a thick cloud their transgressions, others were constrained to testify that God had not only 'power on earth to forgive sins,' but to 'cleanse them from all unrighteousness,' and to make them 'meet for an inheritance with the saints in light.'"

His respected colleague, Mr. Pipe, bears the following testimony to his piety and usefulness:

"In 1795 my lot was cast in the Bradford circuit, Yorkshire; and Mr. Bramwell having been stationed the two preceding years in the adjoining circuit, I had frequent opportunities of hearing the experience of those who had been benefitted by his ministry. His zealous endeavours to promote a spirit of piety among the different societies, his powerful praying and wrestling with God early and late, and his invariable aim to induce believers to 'perfect holiness in the fear of the

Lord,' caused him to be greatly noticed, and drew many to hear him from the neighbouring circuits. These caught the flame; and prayer meetings and watch nights were more strictly observed, and the work of God prospered in many places.

"Thus was he blessed to many in those parts of Yorkshire; but much more so afterwards in the Sheffield circuit. The Lord had greatly refreshed his heritage, before he had received that appointment; but it might be said of him, as of Barnabas, that 'when he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord; for he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord: for he helped them much which had believed through grace.'"

The pious and composed state of his mind, during this great work of God, is clearly shown in the subjoined letters:—

LETTER II.

To Mr. George Marsden.

"Sheffield, 1795.

* * * * *

"The Lord has begun to work among you. I pray that nothing may hinder. Go on your way using every prudent means. Speak evil of no man; neither be discouraged by any. Preach a present salvation, and pray for present blessings; the Lord always prospered this plan. Preach sanctification as a blessing NOW to be received by faith.

"On the day appointed for thanksgiving, the work broke out here in our chapel, at the evening meeting. Many souls had been previously set at liberty in the classes, and at the prayer meetings; but on that night there was a general outpouring of the Spirit. We desired all in distress to come into the vestry, when eight souls were delivered from the bondage of sin. Eight more received pardon on the Sunday. Monday was

our love feast; and near the close of it the power of God came upon us. We concluded at the usual time, but begged of all in distress to stay, and before eight o'clock it appeared to many good men, that more than twenty souls were delivered: the work has gone forward every day since, less or more. In two classes more than twenty experienced salvation. I have had clear evidence, and, to speak within bounds, I am persuaded, of more than one hundred persons having found liberty in three weeks. O pray for us that nothing may hinder! The Lord be with us all in this great work!"

In another letter he refers to the society in Liverpool, and says,

"My prayer is, that you may yet see much greater things before you leave them! May that precious society revive and increase with the increase of God! The salvation of souls is the glory of the ministry. Shall we see the glory spread, or depart? May we hope for the former! and in our little way be willing to die, to see the life! The kingdom will yet come, but, I am led to believe, *not in my time.* However, I know I am drinking much deeper into its spirit: and, in praying without ceasing I shall receive the fulness of God. I am more than ever ashamed of unbelief.—O how it dishonours God and his truth! All is ours, and we shall receive all."

In a third letter he says,

"I have always union with God. I feel nothing but pure love in the greatest afflictions. I am often powerfully tempted, and sometimes heavy;—this was in our Lord. I feel I am going on. I have a continual opening between God and my soul, in prayer, love, and gratitude. I have a constant heaven in dependence upon the Lord. I feel weaker than ever, and God my all. Amen!"

LETTER III.

To Mr. Hargreaves.

"Sheffield, June 30, 1796.

"DEAR BROTHER,

* * * * *

"A good work is still going on here, and many precious souls receive salvation. I am very desirous of more of the image of God, and do find some little increase. I often think of the example of St. Paul, but more of Jesus Christ. I believe it is our place to walk as he walked. I see that the world is in a miserable state; none truly at peace but they who leave all and follow him. Christ hath done all in point of merit,—but we must 'ask and receive, that our joy may be full.' I see more than ever, that those who are given up to God in continual prayer, are men of business both for earth and heaven; they go through the world with composure, are resigned to every cross, and make the greatest glory of the greatest cross. On the other hand, if not given up to God in prayer, every cross brings the greatest perplexity, and robs them of the little love and patience they enjoy. To be all alive to God is (as it were) two heavens; to be unstable, and not a *whole* Christian, is two hells. Oh my brother, I hope you and your house will serve the Lord! I would advise you to consider the great privilege of the gospel; and even beg, yea, beg with tears, that your house may be consecrated to God through the preaching of the word and much prayer, and by having God's servants under your roof. Remember the house of 'Obed-edom.'

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

A respected friend has kindly transmitted the subjoined account:

"Mr. Bramwell's method of preaching had considerable variety in it. Though he accounted it the Alpha

and Omega of his ministry to alarm sinners in the midst of their carnal security, and 'to instruct believers in righteousness, that the man of God might be perfect,' (and in each of these momentous departments he was equally excellent,) yet, in carrying his intentions into effect, he often introduced some agreeable mode of illustration, especially among the poor people in country places.

"I remember to have heard him preach an excellent sermon from Micah iv, 13, 'Arise and thrash, O daughter of Zion! For I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the LORD, of the whole earth.' In an easy and familiar style he explained his text, by informing the good people that corn was thrashed out, among the oriental nations, by means of oxen or horses, which were driven round an area, filled with loose sheaves, and by their continued trampling the corn was separated from the straw. That this might be done the more effectually, the text promised an addition to the natural horny substance on the feet of these animals, by 'making their horn iron and their hoofs brass.' 'In this way,' he said, 'corn is not thrashed in England; but it is among us usually beaten out by a flail; and, as I am preaching to Englishmen, I conceive that I am doing no injury to the sentiments in my text by changing a few of the terms into those which are to you the most familiar.' He then showed how the whole portrayed gospel times; and that, though in a more restricted sense it applied to ministers of the gospel, yet it had a direct reference to the duty of ALL GOD'S PEOPLE, who were commanded to 'arise and thrash,' and whose privilege it was to come to HIM that alone was able to qualify them for their labour. In 'making their horn iron, and their hoofs brass,' the Lord was desirous of imparting stability and perpetuity to his own divine work, by granting supernatural aid to the faithful, that they might perform for him those services to which their own feeble and unassisted pow-

ers were totally inadequate. 'Besides,' he added, 'it is encouraging for the saints to know, that they are provided with weapons both offensive and defensive. The thrashing instrument is of the former description; it is of the same quality as that which is said to be "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil; and this is one of the weapons which he employs, in the hands of his people, to carry his gracious designs into execution. With this, it is promised, they "shall beat in pieces many people."'

"In the course of his sermon, he related, in the metaphorical style which his text sanctioned, many recent and remarkable instances of the successful application of the gospel flail. 'A few days ago,' said he, 'a zealous man, small of stature, went to a neighbouring town,* and, in a most loving spirit, with this implement began to thrash an assembly of ungodly men. When he had finished his work, it was found that he had thrashed the devil out of more than forty persons. And with the help of God, I am resolved, O sinner, to try what effects the smart strokes of this thrashing instrument will produce on thy unhumbled soul!'

"He proceeded to exhort his hearers with considerable ability, to assail sin wherever it appeared. 'Attack it courageously with this powerful flail, which is sometimes called "the sword of the Spirit," and is, in reality, "the word of God." Such a weapon may seem contemptible in the eyes of the natural man; yet, when it is properly wielded, its consequences are invariably potent and salutary. I have known it, in the hands of a feeble woman, bring her husband to "his right mind." In making trial of its efficacy, even little children have caused their parents to cry aloud for mercy. But in every case, much of its heavenly charm and virtue de-

* This was spoken in allusion to Mr. Joseph Oakes, at that time a very useful local preacher in the Sheffield circuit, and who had a few days before been preaching at Thorpe, when many souls were convinced of sin and found peace with God.

pends on the mode in which it is applied. It should always be lifted up in a kind and loving spirit.'

"I highly approved of the ingenious turn which he gave to this scriptural metaphor; and his bold and energetic language was most edifying. If he had spoken in this way only before the faithful, all would have been well. But this free discourse was delivered in my native village; and I knew that many people of frivolous minds, and others who were confirmed scoffers, attended our meetings for the sole purpose of carrying away every thing which they could turn into ridicule. I therefore trembled while Mr. Bramwell was preaching, lest the uncommon remarks which he made, should become food for scorners, and furnish a fund of laughter for their wicked companions. But my apprehensions at once subsided, when, at the close of his address, he made a sudden pause, and said with a grave countenance, and in a tone of voice the most solemn and impressive,—'If any person go from this place and attempt to scoff at the word of truth which he has heard, or the use which I have made of it,—in the name of God I here charge that person to answer at the peril of his soul, for such an act of profanation, before the bar of the great Judge of quick and dead!' This warning was well-timed, and the effects of it most surprising. For though in that place, as in other villages, some few persons monopolize the office of *buffoon-general*, and prostitute their talents to the low arts of foolish jesting; yet neither they, nor any one else ventured to make the least unfavourable allusion to this very singular discourse: thus

> Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
> And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray.

"Mr. Bramwell at all times showed himself greatly attached to the Methodist discipline. Every breach in it caused him as much pain, as the strict observance of it afforded him pleasure. It was therefore with much regret he saw some characters of the greatest promise forfeit their share in the benefits of church fellowship, by forming such matrimonial alliances as were contrary

to the word of God, and in opposition to the rules of Methodism. Whenever he found any young men or women exposed to this fascinating snare, he faithfully described the heinousness of the offence, and affectionately warned them of the danger into which they were running. In relation to this subject, he has sometimes mentioned the following affecting occurrence:

"A young gentleman who was a stranger to religion, paid his addresses to a young lady of great piety. She consulted Mr. Bramwell and other religious friends, all of whom dissuaded her from giving the least countenance to such a connexion. She was shown that no felicitous union could be expected in opposition to the plainest commands of Heaven, as they are expressed in Scripture. Her reason approved of their arguments; but the youth, in making his advances, exhibited wonderful attractions, the influence of which her vanity would not allow her to resist. He often assured her, that, instead of objecting to her religious principles, they heightened her charms in his eyes, and he loved her the more on account of them. When it is farther stated, that he plausibly intimated how her bright example would allure him to the practice of all her virtuous observances,—it is scarcely needful to add, that he succeeded in his purpose, and she gave him her hand. To save appearances, he attended her to public worship on the sabbath, a few times after their marriage. But alas! too soon he threw aside this mask of duplicity; and proceeded from one act of hostility to another, till at length, with all the malicious and premeditated cruelty of an assassin, he made a desperate attempt on her life!—How strongly do facts like this enforce the scriptural exhortation, 'Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers!'"

The following letters, addressed to a young lady at Dewsbury, exhibit Mr. Bramwell's strong affection for his spiritual children, and the judicious manner in which he tendered them his counsel:

LETTER IV.

To Miss Parker.

"Sheffield, March 3, 1796.

"My Dear Sister,—I am glad that you continue in the faith; from which I hope nothing will ever be able to move you.—You know the benefit of loving God with all your heart; and 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.' Oh, dear sister, be a spirit entirely devoted to God! Pray continually! A greater glory will come upon you. You cannot tell what you may receive; but ask in constant faith.

"Let all your life be Christ's.—Consider what he hath done for you, in bringing you into the present light. Thousands have desired to see these things, but have not been permitted. Oh! be thankful, always thankful! This will improve your mind, and prepare it for the receiving of every other blessing.

"I am, with much respect,

"Your servant in Christ,

"Wm. Bramwell.

"P. S.—Can you plead more with God? Can you love God more? Can you have greater union with him? You may have all these with great increase. I want you to continue a burning, as well as a shining light.—I do not see but you may be as useful as Nanny Cutler if you give all to God."

LETTER V.

To the same.

"Sheffield, August 21, 1796.

"My Dear Child,—I am truly happy to find you walking in the truth. I greatly long to see you, and hope that the Lord will make your way plain.

* * * *

"You will, I believe, receive a greater fulness; and I think you are very near a more intimate union with God.—But, keep your evidence clear for sanctification:—Wrestle with God for this;—and when clear, be on stretch for all the fulness. This will be the means of holding fast all that you receive. I want you to live near to God, and in all the sweet mind of Christ. If you give yourself to the Lord every day, in sweet covenant, and lie always in his hands, He, I know, will make all outward things plain to you. But when we exercise in the least our own will, we are never safe, but liable to every error, and to many evils. You shall see great things even in your life; only be faithful in every little act for God. He will make you ruler over many things.

"Several families have turned to God in Sheffield lately; some of them are of the most respectable class. I wonder at the Lord's goodness. The work is still going on.—May God, who hath made you and me of the same mind and disposition, give his great blessing to Dewsbury this year! Now may the God of peace, who gives peace to his church, give us all peace and love! May the blessed work go on in every place, till this nation is overspread with the glory of God! Oh, pray, pray! and the Lord will answer.

"I am, with much respect,

"Your servant in Christ,

"Wm. Bramwell."

In the preceding part of this memoir, the reader will have perceived how deeply Mr. Bramwell was concerned for the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom. If souls were saved, it occupied little of his concern to know who were the instruments employed by the Almighty. However feeble the means might be, he was anxious that all the glory might redound to the Giver of all good. With these views, he greatly rejoiced to hear of the usefulness of Miss Mary Barrett, a pious female of Colne, who had begun to exhort in public, and had been rendered a great blessing.

Many eminent divines have entertained discordant opinions respecting female preaching. Mr. Bramwell thought that, in the accomplishment of the great work of human redemption, the Almighty had a sovereign right to make his own election of instruments. To question the validity of any one's call whose labours were clearly sanctioned by the broad seal of Heaven, appeared, in his eyes, a most unwarrantable act of presumption.

It is well known that female preachers are not peculiar to Methodism. They have been recognised as accredited teachers by the Quakers from the beginning. It is probable, that, on this subject, Mr. Bramwell's sentiments were much in unison with those of the respectable society of Friends. He regarded Joel's prophecy as containing an obvious reference to the gospel dispensation. In this view it was quoted by the apostle Peter on the day of pentecost: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, said God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your *daughters* shall prophesy; and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my *handmaidens* I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." A few women of great piety were accustomed at an early period in the history of Methodism, publicly to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. They took up this cross, because they considered it a duty; and in bearing a testimony for Christ, they were sometimes called to suffer persecution. Their previous attainments and experience, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, qualified them for this weighty undertaking; and their pious exertions were greatly blessed in the Lord. Among these ancient female worthies, was the late Miss Bosanquet, (afterwards Mrs. Fletcher,) who frequently engaged in this interesting employment. Some persons had expressed a degree of surprise at her continuing occasionally to address a congregation. It was her desire to "abstain from all appearance of evil," and to do nothing by which a weak brother might be offended. She

therefore wrote to that "great man in Israel," the Rev. John Wesley, stated her case, and received from him the following reply:

To Miss Bosanquet.

"Londonderry, June 13, 1771.

"My Dear Sister,—I think the strength of the cause rests there,—in your having an extraordinary call. So I am persuaded, has every one of our lay preachers: otherwise I could not countenance their preaching at all. It is plain to me that the whole work of God termed Methodism, is an extraordinary dispensation of his providence. Therefore I do not wonder if several things occur therein, which do not fall under *ordinary rules* of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule of discipline was, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation;' yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions; at Corinth in particular.

"I am, my dear sister,

"Your affectionate brother,

"J. Wesley."

Similar to these were Mr. Bramwell's views. He considered that Miss Barrett had "an extraordinary call," and to him she appeared to be divinely qualified for the work. She had received a good education and possessed great strength of understanding; she was distinguished for the depth of her piety and the fervency of her zeal, and her labours in public were very successful. He therefore gave her every encouragement to proceed in the path in which, by the blessing of God, she had been rendered useful in her own confined neighbourhood, and thought her called by Divine providence to move in a more extensive circle. Many persons, in different parts of the kingdom, will have reason to bless God that they were favoured with the privilege of hearing from her lips the joyful sound of the gospel. With the subjoined letter to her we will close this chapter.

LETTER VI.

To Miss Barrett.

"Sheffield, Saturday.

"My Dear Sister in Christ,—I live in much peace and love; but for a season am not able to declare it. I have seen his arm made bare lately; but was forced to stop. I thank the Lord, he is with you. May a greater power rest upon you and upon the people! Your work is great; and the Lord can work with you.

"I had a blessed time with Mr. Blagborne. He wanted much to see you. God is with him. I hope you will pray for us more and more. Sister Rhodes is come; but she wants lifting up.

"I should hold a love feast at Mansfield next Monday. Is it possible that you can go in my place? I beg that you will return me an answer by the bearer. It is about twelve miles from Chesterfield. I shall not rest, unless I can have a proper supply. I beg you will give my love to all friends. I long to see them.

"I am yours, &c,

"Wm. Bramwell."

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Bramwell's removal to the Nottingham circuit—Unsettled state of the society in that place—Great exertions to procure a place of worship—Remarkable answers to prayer—Letters—Anecdotes—His conduct as a Superintendent.

Nottingham was the next scene of Mr. Bramwell's labours. The conference of 1798 appointed him to that circuit. A great number of our members had joined the new connexion; and those who remained were in a very unsettled state As Mr. Bramwell was much esteemed, it was thought that his labours might prove peculiarly beneficial, and tend to heal the wounds which the church had received. The trustees of our

large chapel in Nottingham had given it up to Mr. Kilham. Our preachers, therefore, were obliged to officiate in private houses and barns, or such other places as they could procure for the purpose. This was very embarrassing, and caused many painful feelings to the preachers; but to Mr. Bramwell, who was leaving a circuit where all was harmony and love, these things must have been peculiarly distressing. He entered, however, upon his new station with a fixed resolution not to engage in any controversy respecting the division, but to do every thing in his power to build up the broken walls of Zion, and to bring souls to Christ.

The following letter, written soon after his entrance into the circuit, will show what were the leading objects of his attention.

LETTER VII.

To Miss Barrett.

"Nottingham, September 22, 1798.

"My Dear Sister in the Lord,—I was sorry to hear of your sudden call. I hope your mind is kept composed. God hath given; he will take away when it pleaseth him. Our fathers and our mothers are His. Oh for submission to his blessed will in all things! This shows how uncertain we are in this world.

"I pray more; and will still cry, 'Lord make us meet for thy glory!' Every moment may we live to him, and him alone! I am giving myself to continual prayer. What will be the answer, I cannot tell; but shall wait to see his glory in the blessed Jesus. He is our all, and must bring all we need.

"I found things flat in Nottingham. Building chapels are hard times. Almost in every country place I have seen the Lord work; and I do hope to see greater things than these.

"We all expect you immediately when you are set free. The Lord bring you soon, that you may cast

your net into this deep sea of iniquity, and bring to land a few souls for his glory! I long to show the world his blood, and then to stand before the throne of God. I pray that you, and every soul that speaks for the Lord, may cry in every place, 'Prepare to meet thy God!'

"I have found very few in this circuit that know any thing about sanctification. What are we? God be merciful to us! O save us, both preachers and people! Amen. Do pray more still, and say to the Lord for me, 'I will not let thee go unless thou bless him.' May we live every day to God!

"I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"WILLIAM BRAMWELL."

But though Mr. Bramwell always endeavoured to preserve his spirituality untainted by grovelling objects, and for this cause refused to intermeddle in the mutual railing, which was then a practice too frequent among those who had formerly been "brethren beloved;" yet it must not be supposed from this that he was, in the time of difficulty, a supine auxiliary. If he did not enter into *wordy* discussions that ministered to mutual aggravation, he showed by *deeds* that he was greatly concerned for the welfare of the connexion, and exerted himself most heartily to raise the necessary funds for erecting a new chapel in Nottingham. For this purpose he was diligent in collecting all the money he could possibly procure from his wealthy friends; and of these there were not a few to whom his ministry had been made a blessing. Mr. Henry Longden, of Sheffield, gives the following narrative of Mr. Bramwell's visit to that town:

"At that time, be it remembered, Nottingham and Huddersfield were peculiarly circumstanced, with respect to their chapels, and though Sheffield was not one of the circuits enumerated in the minutes of the conference to be applied to for the relief of Nottingham, yet it was deemed proper to send Mr. Bramwell there as a powerful advocate for both those places.

"We can never forget the first appearance of Mr. Bramwell at that time in Garden-street chapel. He had given the people no previous notice of his coming. The sight of him therefore produced an astonishing and almost electrical effect upon the society. The remembrance of the many happy seasons with each other in public and in private, passed in overwhelming review, and the people could not sing, nor could their beloved minister preach or pray, without the most powerful efforts and frequent interruptions. Their joy was indeed ecstatic. When the object of his visit was known, the people vied with each other, and seemed as if they would pour in their whole store. Their bounty was so lavish, that he had to restrain the feelings and limit the donations of many, till, oppressed with a torrent of love and gratitude, he suddenly left the town, to prevent the poor from exceeding the proper bounds of their benevolence. Multitudes tendered their voluntary offerings without making any inquiry about the object to which it was to be applied. In this affectionate manner did they testify their love to a revered pastor, who had been a sharer in their joys, and had borne a part in their sorrows."

While he was thus actively employed in Sheffield, he addressed the subjoined letter to his beloved wife, in which it is evident, "Whatever work his hands employed, his heart was still with God."

LETTER VIII.

To Mrs. Bramwell.

"Sheffield, December 7th, 1798.

"My Dear Ellen,—I thought of seeing you this evening; but am persuaded it will be well for Mr. Pipe to come a few days. I see a work for myself in Sheffield.

"We have blessed seasons every day, and some are daily saved. I am stretching towards the *mark;* my soul continually goes out after the Lord; I am sure we are just beginning to live, and believe we shall live like

our Lord in meekness and love. Oh! what need of keeping up the strife every day! May nothing slacken our pace! Our fight is nearly over—our crown will shortly be given.

Let us live every moment free from all the world. We never bring such glory to God as when we cast our all upon him. He loves to bear his children in his arms, and to see them always joyful. Oh Ellen! trust in him,—pray to him,—work for him,—have no fear,—rush through all to save a soul from burning. I pray for you.—I have the whole family upon my heart. I trust Miss Rhodes will ever join us in seeking this latter day glory! May we all live as near to Christ as it is possible for the spirit in the body! Nothing shall in this world, for one moment, make us rest short of the mind of Jesus.

"I am sure you will see and know that I am with God in Christ Jesus. I am enabled, through grace, to love all more and more, and to love God in all. Oh! keep this recollection of soul; let nothing bustle the spirit; let nothing make you CARE; be always at His feet, waiting and longing to be with Him!—The Lord bless you and the children! Amen.

"I am yours affectionately,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

Mr. Tatham, a respectable local preacher in Nottingham, has furnished the following interesting information:

"It is now upwards of twenty-two years since I first became acquainted with our much lamented brother, Mr. Bramwell. The benefit which I derived from a close intimacy with him during his three years' residence in Nottingham, will, I trust, never be erased from my memory. His whole deportment and conversation were such, as evinced that he constantly lived in the spirit of prayer and devotedness to God. On some particular occasions I have had the honour of entertaining him under my roof, when I have been a witness to his ardent supplications at a throne of grace at

the early hour of four o'clock in the morning: and this, I have been informed, was a regular practice with him, in winter as well as in summer.

"Some remarkable answers to his prayers have come within my observation. One or two instances I well remember. At the division of the Methodist body, in the year 1797, the society in Nottingham, being deprived of their chapel, had no place of worship in which to assemble; they were consequently under the necessity of erecting a new one, but they found it difficult to procure a piece of land suitable for the purpose; the boundaries of this town, being limited by the common right to the fields which surround it, vacant plots of ground in the interior of the town, are not only very scarce, but also very dear. For nine months we had been on the search; during which we made application for such pieces of land as we deemed eligible, but all without effect. No one would sell us any land. The most desirable situation was a paddock belonging to the late John Sherwin, Esq., and various were the applications made in our behalf. But this gentleman also refused to accommodate us with any part of his estate. Thus all our attempts were frustrated, and our hopes apparently blasted. But our extremity was the Lord's opportunity; for, at the very time we were ready to despair of finding a situation, our worthy friends, the late Mr. Henry Longden and Mr. Bramwell, came over from Sheffield to see us. This was on the twenty-eighth of May, 1798. The next morning I had a private interview with Mr. Bramwell, when he asked me if we had procured a piece of land for the chapel. To which I replied in the negative, assuring him that there was not one suitable place in the town for which we had not endeavoured to make interest, and yet had applied without success. He heard me with much attention, and then said, 'Brother Tatham, let us pray about it.' In his prayer he said, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof,—the cattle also upon a thousand hills. The hearts of all men are in his hands, and he can turn them as the rivers of the south.' He

then most feelingly described our situation, crying, 'Lord! thou seest their necessity, and I believe thou wilt provide a piece of land for them, on which to build this chapel.' And soon afterwards with increasing faith he said, 'Lord! I believe thou wilt find them a piece of land this day.' Which expression he repeated several times, laying a particular emphasis upon THIS DAY. Perhaps no one ever entertained a higher opinion of Mr. Bramwell's faith and prayer than myself; yet (even in the face of that promise which I had frequently seen fulfilled, Mark xi, 24,*) when I had called to remembrance the various applications we had made, and the disappointments which had followed, I found it difficult to believe against hope.

"But the Lord's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor are his ways as our ways. After breakfasting at Mr. Bartholomew's, (then our superintendent preacher,) we agreed to search the town for some other piece of land. But in a short time I was called off upon other business, and could not afterwards meet with my friends, although I sought them the whole forenoon. I afterwards found that Mr. Bramwell and Mr. Longden had gone to Mr. Sherwin's paddock, which we had entirely despaired of obtaining. It will be necessary to observe, that John Fellows, Esq., has a garden at the back of his house, which adjoins the theatre on one side and Mr. Sherwin's paddock on the other. Mr. Longden on his return stated that they had seen some land *near the theatre* suitable for the purpose. I asked if it belonged to Mr. Fellows, because I recollected that he had a garden near the theatre, to which he replied, 'I think that is the gentleman's name.' I then remarked, 'We have long sought in vain; and in some instances have endeavoured to conceal our intention of building a chapel. We will now go openly: I will wait upon Mr. Fellows, and ask him if he will sell us a part of his garden as a site for a Methodist chapel.'

* 'Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.'

I did so, and after a short pause, that worthy gentleman said, 'I will let you have it.'

"Soon after my return, I discovered that the land which was promised to me, though the most eligible of any in that part of the town, was not the same as that on which Mr. Longden had fixed. He had seen Mr. Sherwin's paddock; and not knowing that it had often been refused to us, he had considered it a most excellent situation. When he related the result of his search, he mistook Mr. Sherwin's name; and gave me to understand that, as well as he could recollect, the lot of which he approved belonged to Mr. Fellows. But being a stranger in Nottingham, he had forgotten the name of the real owner, and was quite undesignedly the cause of my going to Mr. Fellows, with whom I happily succeeded. How mysterious are the ways of Providence! For it so happened that two circumstances, trivial in appearance, (viz. my absence from the friends who went to look at the ground, and Mr. Longden's mistake in substituting the name of Fellows for Sherwin,) put us that day in possession of the site of land upon which our chapel was afterwards built. And all this appeared to be done, that the prayer of faith might have its accomplishment. 'Now all things are possible to him that believeth.'

"Another instance of Mr. Bramwell's faith, was at the time when a general alarm agitated our body respecting a bill which M. A. Taylor, Esq., was about to bring into the House of Commons, to abridge the religious liberties of Dissenters. Many at that season were lead to plead mightily with God, that our privileges might be continued; and, among others, Mr. Bramwell did not forget to offer up his fervent supplications. At the evening service, one Lord's day, before a very crowded congregation, he got into an agony of prayer; and, after wrestling for some time, he said, 'Lord! Thou hast now told me, that this bill shall never pass into a law.' Adding, 'It is out of the power of any man, or any set of men, to bring it to pass!'

Several of the congregation thought he was going too far; but in about a week afterwards the bill was quashed.

"In the great revival of the work of God, which broke out at Sheffield and Nottingham about the same time, Mr. Bramwell took a very active part. At several of our meetings, the outpouring of the Spirit was so manifest, that a whole assembly have been wrought upon and powerfully affected at once. Such glorious displays of the Lord's omnipotent power, and of his willingness to save perishing sinners, I believe will never be forgotten by hundreds, who then partook of the Divine blessing. It seemed as if the Lord was about to 'sweep the nations and shake the earth, till all proclaimed him God.'—But in several revivals of religion, when God has raised up various witnesses of his power to save, and instruments to carry his purposes into execution, the enemy of souls has also been very forward to promote the interests of his kingdom. In order to compass his infernal designs, he has raised up instruments to ape or imitate the work of God, in the same manner as in the days of old, when, by his servant Pharaoh, he ordered the magicians of Egypt to exhibit the very miracles which Moses had performed by the Divine command. If the hypocrisy of such characters is not timely discovered, the injury which the good cause will sustain by them, is inconceivable. Now Mr. Bramwell was by no means of a censorious disposition; yet he had the gift of discerning the spirits and dispositions of men in a remarkable manner. I have frequently known him detect impostors who have stepped forth to exercise in various meetings. On one occasion when he was desired to visit a dying man, I went with him. We beheld the wretched object without a shirt to his back. The few rags which hung on him scarcely covered his body. His habitation was a damp miserable cellar, and a woman was attending him who was represented to be his wife. For some time after our entrance into this dwelling, Mr. Bramwell remained silent; at length he exclaimed 'All is not right here! I am clear there is something amiss in this place!'

Then turning to the woman, he said, 'This man is not your husband. You never were married to him; but for several years you have been living together in sin and wickedness!'—His word went with power to their heart,—they both wept exceedingly, acknowledged the charge to be true, and began to entreat the Lord to have mercy upon them."

Like the great Apostle, Mr. Bramwell was willing to "become all things to all men, that he might gain some:" of which the following is a striking instance:

At one of the villages in the Nottingham circuit, several persons had left the Methodist Society and joined the Quakers. Mr. Bramwell heard with pain that they had withdrawn themselves. The next time of his going to preach in that place, it occurred to him, that it perhaps might be profitable to deviate a little from the usual mode of public worship; and therefore after his sermon, he said to the congregation, "Sit down, friends! and we will hold a Quakers' meeting." He then exhorted them to lift up their hearts to God, and earnestly, though silently, to pray for the descent of the Holy Ghost. While he and the congregation were thus engaged, the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon them; several fell from their seats, some in great distress of mind, while others felt the "overwhelming power of grace divine." So that Mr. Bramwell himself seemed to be quite overpowered, and cried out, "Oh, my Lord! I never thought of this!"

Wherever Mr. Bramwell went, he endeavoured to promote the comfort and happiness of all around him. When any of the members of the numerous families whom he visited, were in distress or affliction, like another Samaritan, his bowels of mercy yearned over them, and his benevolent arm was stretched out to their relief. To lessen the portion of human misery, and to be instrumental in pouring the balm of consolation into the wounded spirit, afforded him the highest gratification. In relation to these remarks, the following narrative of facts was given by one Mr. Greensmith, on the 14th of December, 1818.

"William Greensmith, son of Thomas Greensmith, of Watnal, near Nottingham, when about nine years of age, was severely afflicted with a scrofulous humour in his eyes, so that he was unable to bear the light even with bandages upon them. Mr. Bramwell was then in the Nottingham circuit, and went in his regular turn, to preach at Mr. Greensmith's house. On one of these occasions, he remained all night; and previous to his departure the next morning, when his horse was brought to the door, he asked where the boy was who had sore eyes. Mrs. Greensmith replied, that he was in a dark room behind the door. He wished him to be called out; he came and stood near Mr. Bramwell, who put his hand on the boy's head, and looked upwards, as if in the act of ejaculatory prayer. He then went out, leaving the child standing: while the latter, as if conscious of some important change, pulled off his bandages, looked through the window, and asked if Mr. Bramwell was gone. On perceiving that his eyes were perfectly healed, all the family were completely astonished. He is now about thirty years of age, and has never since had any complaint in his organs of sight."

In this circuit Mr. Pipe became again his colleague, and speaks thus of him:

"In 1799, I was again called to labour with Mr. Bramwell in the Nottingham circuit. Our chapel in Nottingham was taken from us by the separatists; in consequence of which, our preachers and people were under the necessity of meeting in a barn till another place of worship was erected in the town. In this they were made to prove, that places of the humblest construction became Bethels when consecrated by the blessing and presence of God. Here many souls were awakened and brought to the knowledge of the truth: and when the new chapel was opened, the good work continued to increase and prosper, till they were under the necessity of having it enlarged. Perhaps Mr. Bramwell, in all his travels, never saw more glorious displays of the Divine power, than in this circuit. A great concern for religion discovered itself among all ranks;

and many were 'brought out of darkness into marvellous light.' The societies were united and edified; 'and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.' The name of the Lord Jesus was magnified; and several deists renounced their infidelity, and found redemption in the precious blood of Christ. Provisions at that time were extremely high, but the minds of the people were borne above all; and our social meetings were spiritual, instructive, and delightful. The increase of the societies during the two years I travelled with him, was about one thousand persons; and the circuit was afterwards divided into three."

The following important details are communicated by Mr. John Clark, of Nottingham:

"I was well acquainted with Mr. Bramwell during the three years of his travelling in our circuit. I watched his conduct narrowly, that I might, if possible, discover some flaw in a character so celebrated for holiness. But, after a strict observance of his actions and deportment for a length of time, I was compelled to draw this conclusion,—I have never yet seen his equal.

"I never saw in him any thing like duplicity or partiality. No: I believe he loved all men and feared none. His preaching abilities were not of the common kind. His texts were wisely chosen, and his subjects well arranged. It never was any part of his consideration, 'In which of my discourses do I appear to the greatest advantage?' But the inquiry in his closet was, 'What do these people need?' His grand maxim was to adapt his sermons to the condition of his hearers; and this is one reason why his ministry was so successful. His discourses were plain, pointed, and experimental. They were generally accompanied with the demonstration and power of the Holy Ghost. I heard nearly all the sermons which he preached in the town of Nottingham, and do not recollect having once had a barren season, except at one time when he was lame, and could not stand to preach. I have often seen a congregation of two thousand people so affected un-

der his preaching, as to be unable to restrain their feelings, till tears have afforded some relief. It was impossible that any one could sit under him without being benefited. Ingenious and clear in his ideas, he had always something new, and never preached two sermons alike.

"I attribute the greater portion of his success in the ministry, to his diligence in prayer. It seemed as though, when he was closeted with the KING of kings, he had the varied states of the people unveiled to him in a manner the most remarkable. Thus was he qualified to direct 'a word in season' to each of his hearers. He entered most minutely into their experience. In his preaching, he could dissect the mind and feelings of all his congregation, and disclose his actual condition to every individual.

"Mr. Bramwell did not blend the doctrines of the gospel together, and thus form them into one confused mass which nobody was capable of understanding. In a very masterly manner, he displayed distinctly the attributes of God, the fall of man, the doctrine of free grace, the great atonement of Christ, repentance towards God and faith in the blessed sacrifice of Christ in order to be justified from the guilt of sin, and from the condemning power of the law of God. He was accustomed to maintain, that a sinner who feels himself thus redeemed and justified, is 'a babe in Christ,' and only a babe. It was necessary therefore, he insisted, that this incipient believer should hold fast the beginning of his confidence without wavering, and go on to be perfected in love, till he obtained the Divine nature, and recovered the blessed image of God.—These were the doctrines which Mr. Bramwell constantly pressed on his hearers. He was very desirous that they should ascertain the ground on which they stood, as it regarded their religious experience.

"He never would address a lazy insensible company. He would neither allow children to cry during the time of divine service, nor any one to look around at the door and gaze on passing objects. If they did not

appear inclined to give him their undivided attention, he would instantly desist,—accounting it no personal mark of disrespect to himself, but a sort of contumely poured on the gospel. It was his expressed determination not to preach to a people who trifled with the word of God. This commendable practice produced a degree of solemnity in the people, that assisted him much in the impressions which he wished to make.

"He laboured to promote the sanctification of his hearers, both by his addresses in the pulpit, and his faithful instructions in private. To accomplish this great object, he fasted, watched, and prayed, in season and out of season, both day and night. The fervency of his prayers, and the greatness of his zeal, were unparalleled. While he was with us at Nottingham, it was his regular practice to rise at four o'clock in the morning during the summer months, and at five in the winter. The first of his waking hours was devoted to earnest intercessions in behalf of his family and friends, the church and the world, and for a blessing on his own ministry. The next hour he attended the morning prayer meeting; but if it was a day on which there was none, he would remain in his study, reading the Scriptures, and studying for the edification of his flock. In this manner he spent the forenoon of every day, seasoning all his exercises with much prayer. The whole of the afternoon was generally appropriated to visiting the sick and poor of the society. Into whatever house he went, it was a point of conscience with him not to leave it without praying. It appeared as though he could scarcely bear to live unless he was made useful. He often entreated the Lord, that he might be delivered from that bitter cup—a useless life. Indeed his feelings were such as cannot be described. I have frequently heard him declare in meetings, that he could almost wish 'himself accursed from Christ,' if souls might but be saved.

"How often have we heard him, as in an agony, wrestle with God for the distressed! And when they have obtained deliverance, how has he been filled 'un-

utterably full of glory and of God!' At such seasons, his countenance has shone as with a heavenly radiance, his eyes have sparkled like flames of fire, his whole frame has been full of animation, and I have heard him say that he felt as though he could then lift up 'all the apostate race of man' to God. I shall always remember the first renewal of our covenant at which Mr. Bramwell presided. After the excellent terms of our renewed engagements had been read, Mr. Henry Longden, sen., from Sheffield, spoke to the congregation and prayed. Several others joined in the like exercises. After all, Mr. Bramwell engaged in prayer, when he appeared to lay such hold of the Almighty as to prevail with him for a blessing. The glory of God descended on all the society present, in such a powerful manner as I never before experienced. Many were so affected, that, at the conclusion of the service, they could not come down the gallery stairs without assistance. That was the beginning of good days at Nottingham.

"I was once attacked by a violent pleuritic fever, when all around me despaired of my life. Many of our kind friends visited me in my affliction; and almost unceasing supplication was offered up to God for my recovery. But all prayers appeared to be without effect till Mr. Bramwell came home out of the circuit. He immediately came to see me, and on entering the room, was quite astonished at beholding such a woful change in my appearance. He thought I had all the marks of speedy dissolution upon me; and giving me a look of the greatest sympathy, he raised my head a little higher by means of a pillow. He then went to the foot of the bed, and began to pray to God in my behalf. His faith seemed to gain ground as he proceeded. He continued his intercessions with the greatest fervency; and, in an agony, asked in submission to the will of God, that I might be restored. The Lord heard and answered his servant's prayers. For I immediately experienced such a sweet tranquillity and melting of soul, as I am unable to describe. From that moment my recovery com-

menced, and I was soon strong enough to resume my ordinary occupations. Thus Mr. Bramwell might be said to be possessed of a key that opened heaven and drew the blessing down.

"He walked and talked with God: his hourly communion was with his Maker. Many are the blessings temporal and spiritual, which have been procured by his prayers. I attribute all our great national deliverances to the united entreaties of such men as Mr. Bramwell. When Bonaparte threatened our happy land, our departed friend made the subject not only matter of private prayer, but introduced it into his public intercessions. Who can ever forget the confident manner in which he at those times expressed himself? He was always particularly earnest in his supplications for the health and long life of our good old king.

"As a superintendent, his conduct was most exemplary. He was anxious to know what proficiency the people made in religion. To ascertain this, he met the society in every country place where he went, and requested his itinerant brethren to do the same. The local preachers were also desired to meet every society in the various places in which they preached. He was determined, by one means or other, to know all the members of society, and how they conducted themselves. He detested slander in all its forms, and would therefore never allow any one to speak evil of an absent person. Adhering to the scriptural direction, 'Tell him his fault between thee and him alone,' he never suffered any difference between brethren to be introduced into the leaders' meeting, unless the parties had spoken to each other about the matter in private. When any affair was brought forward in that meeting, he studied to settle it with as few words as possible, avoiding all debates and cavils, which tend to mischief. If any one in his remarks wandered from the point in discussion, Mr. Bramwell always interrupted him, and would not let him confound others by extraneous subjects. We never had an unpleasant meeting on business during the whole of the three years that he spent

with us. When any thing unpleasant offered itself, he had both wisdom and courage to act in a discreet and prompt manner, and thus the business was at once settled.

"On quarter days and other public occasions, it was his wish to have secular concerns despatched with all convenient speed; and to spend the remainder of the time in earnest social prayer. From such meetings the local preachers and country leaders departed happy and comfortable, praising God for the enjoyments which they had experienced. It was his constant endeavour to stimulate to action all men that held an office in the church, and to make them view the cause of God as their own. Formality and stillness were his dread; he was afraid that they would produce a sleepy and lukewarm spirit.

"How great was his charity to his Christian brethren! I have heard him declare, that he should delight in 'having all things common,' as the primitive believers had after the day of pentecost. He was ever inclined to 'do good unto all men, especially unto them who were of the household of faith.' To share his last penny with one of the poor of Christ's family, was with him a circumstance by no means uncommon. He would never consent to have more than one suit of clothes, and one pair of shoes, in a course of wearing at a time. And as soon as they began to have a worn appearance, he bought new ones and gave the old ones to those who were in need. In manifesting his sympathy with the poor and afflicted, he 'wept with those that wept.'—When any of the society had acted in an improper manner, so as to disgrace their profession, and, in the execution of church discipline, were excluded from the body, he was disconsolate, and frequently mourned over them as a man that had been bereaved of his only son."

In the Nottingham circuit, it is seen Mr. Bramwell was again honoured with a third year's appointment, which proved very beneficial to that society. Although his labours were eminently blessed, yet from the following letter to the late pious Mrs. Baiston of Leeds,

it seems that preaching and other pastoral duties were "weariness and pain to slothful flesh and blood." It is singular too, that, twenty years prior to his death, he should have an impression on his mind that his departure out of this world would be sudden.

LETTER IX.

To Mrs. Baiston.

"Nottingham, May 23, 1799.

"My Dear Sister,—I have promised to write to you, but oh! how slow in performing! This, God knows, is too much like my other works—done with reluctance. I have sometimes thought much on this head,—whether I shall receive so bright a crown as those who so readily enter into the greatest matters. To preach, to pray, &c, &c, continues to be my daily cross. Lord! thy work and will be done in me, and by me, more heartily.

"My faith, my love to Jesus, my union with the saints and my prospect of glory increase daily. For some weeks past I have been seeking to be ready at any instant. *I have received a persuasion that I shall go in a moment.* Whether this be from my Father or not, I feel it has a good effect upon my mind: I live for him. Do, my dear sister, pray,—yea, always in private pray, that my soul may receive and retain all the glory!—Amen, Lord Jesus!

"I hope you will still care for the feeblest child, the tenderest lamb. Never forget you were once weak,—wanting every prop, every prayer. Look well to the lambs. Your great work is to nourish these and lead them on to glory. But at the same time view the blessing which is prepared. Hunger, thirst, cry mightily to God for all he has to give. I am persuaded many draw back after the cleansing touch; and the cause generally is, their not determining to receive the WHOLE. Oh! see St. Paul, 'I reach forward:' hence, 'I have kept the faith.' You have received blessings of the greatest value in their nature: but these may all be

increased a hundred fold. Oh! I want you to live in the holy place, in the nearest union, in the greatest *glory, being changed* from one degree of it into another.

"I have thought, that if I am spared, I may receive in one month a double weight. I find all things removed that would hinder, all things at work to my help; and I have confidence that I shall pursue to the utmost the great salvation. What have we done? All seems nothing. I have stood to look back on all my works; but I cannot fix my mind on ONE that yields joy. I instantly look to Jesus, and in him I do rejoice. Lord, save me! save my dear family! save my friends! save thy church! Amen, Lord Jesus!

"I do and shall ever thank God, for your habitation, and the mercy under your roof. Our kind love to dear Mr. Baiston. Pray on! Oh pray more! I will join you.

"WM. BRAMWELL."

The subjoined letters to Mr. Thomas Jackson, of Dewsbury, and to Miss Barrett, show his spirituality of mind, his zeal for God, and his tenderness of conscience.

LETTER X.

To Mr. Thomas Jackson.

"Nottingham, June 21, 1799.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—If I had not promised, I should scarcely have ventured to write by the post. I thank God that you have peace and love restored. Oh! continue it with all prosperity! The Lord save you, your family, and the whole society! Give our dear love to them all. God is with us. I am nearer the throne; and never was so dependent on Jesus: HE IS MY ALL, bless the Lord:—God is working; but we want greater things. I trust we shall see such glory as we have not yet done. Do tell your dear wife we love her in the Lord, and shall pray for her. Oh! may she be the mother in your little church. My brother,

live every moment in the spirit of prayer. Preach in the same power. Take courage, and work for your God. Amen!

"Write to me soon, and let me know every thing. Continue to pray for me. Be faithful to me. I must have a clear conscience in every thing. I can do nothing because others do it. Oh! may I keep my soul pure! Lord, stand by me and the church for ever!

"I am your servant in Jesus,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XI.

To Mr. Thomas Jackson.

"Nottingham, September 4, 1799.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I thank you for your friendly letter; and I praise God that you continue to pray for me; which I hope you will ever do, till we meet in glory. I am striving with continued prayer to live nearer to God than I have ever done; and he brings my soul into closer union; I live with Jesus: he is my all. Oh! he lays me at his feet. I am less than nothing in his sight.

"This walking with God! this conversation in heaven! Oh! how I am ashamed! I sink in silent love. I wonder how the Lord has ever borne with me so long. I never had such a view of God and myself. I pray that every moment of my life may show forth his praise. Praise him for ever! Do give my love to Mr. Miller The Lord will make him a great blessing to you all: Pray for him, and help him all you can. Your circuit, I believe, will arise. May the Lord send you salvation, and may all the circuit praise him!

* * * * *

"I pray that grace and peace may be multiplied amongst you all! The Lord is working in town and country; but we wait for greater things than these. Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly! Amen!

"I am yours, affectionately,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XII.

To Miss Barrett.

"Nottingham, September 27, 1800

* * * * *

"I write to you, my dear friend and companion in the tribulation of Jesus, our common Lord and Saviour; who is, and shall be, our glory, in this world, and in that which is to come! I am waiting for my place with earnest longing; and am truly desirous of being near my blessed Lord. I am more than ever convinced of this truth, that the degrees in heaven will astonish thousands. And should not we see our privileges on earth? Oh! let us labour with this view every day. We have not long to work; and, therefore, may we suffer all his will!

"I am enabled to consider your calling, and how much you may be drawn from your own purpose. In this I say, 'Thy will be done!'

"Please inform us of the time of your coming, and so abide; because many are kept in a state of suspense, which is rather uncomfortable for us.

"We are unworthy: I feel this! Yet God is among the people, saving and filling. But we want you; and God will come with you. Do come immediately, and let me know the time. Our love to you and all friends.

"Yours, &c,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER XIII.

To Miss Barrett.

"Taghill, Nottingham, October 16, 1800.

"My Dear Sister,—I was much affected when I came home and found you were gone; especially as we had both promised for Dunnington circuit and Leicester, and thousands were waiting for you at Mount Sorrel. There is such an opening for you in that country as I never saw before.

"I bless God that you ever came amongst us. Were it in the order of God, I should not have the least objection to stand by you in every place till we take our seats in glory. Pray for us every day. I trust I shall ever pray for you.

"I have had a powerful season at Bulwell; several souls saved. The same at Watnal, and last night at Eastwood. Glory, glory, glory to God! Please write to me soon, and tell me of your journeys and labours in every place. The Lord bless you all! and may thousands be saved!

"Yours, &c,
"WM. BRAMWELL."

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Bramwell is appointed to travel in Leeds—His great popularity and usefulness—His qualifications for the ministry—Letters—Some severe trials—Begins to travel in the Wetherby circuit, and afterwards in Hull—Anecdotes—Letters.

IN 1801, the conference was held at Leeds. Many of the friends in this town were particularly desirous of having Mr. Bramwell stationed here. Their request was granted by conference, as a favour: and Messrs. Barber and Reece were appointed his colleagues. Previous to his arrival, many had entertained unfavourable sentiments concerning his ministerial talents; and, indeed, the opinion has perhaps been too prevalent, that if a man enter heartily into what has been termed THE REVIVAL, or, in other words, if he encourage prayer meetings, and exhort plain simple people to unite in carrying on the work of God,—this is a manifest proof of his being a person of only ordinary abilities. Now, were this sentiment actually correct, it would only prove, that the Lord is pleased at times to "choose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." But the sentiment is extremely erroneous; for it is a fact, which none will be disposed to question, that Mr. Wesley was a man of the most profound erudition, and it is

well known that he was the decided friend and advocate of the work of God. No one can peruse his journals, which have been very properly called a "History of Revivals," without being convinced of the truth of this remark. Mr. Bramwell had not, however, been long in the circuit before the mist of prejudice was completely dispelled; and he was soon regarded as an eminent minister of the gospel.

From my great and close intimacy with him I had frequent opportunities of judging of his intellectual qualifications, and I think it proper here to state, that he had acquired an extensive acquaintance with the arts and sciences, could read the Scriptures in their original tongues,* and had obtained a knowledge of the French language.

Considering his disadvantages during the early part of his life, it will be readily granted that he could not have mean ideas of human learning. How many laborious days, perhaps years, must he have spent in obtaining those ministerial abilities which, through Divine grace, rendered him so useful in the church! He was a good sermonizer, and no one was more orthodox or pure in the doctrines which he taught. They who did not attend minutely to his sermons, not readily perceiving his divisions, (the formality of which he always despised,) considered them as rhapsodies without connexion. But he never preached without a plan; and his mode of treating subjects was often ingenious and original. His ardour for the salvation of sinners, and the assistance which he received from the Holy Spirit, frequently exalted him above all formal preachers. Because he was eminently holy and faithful, the Most High condescended to render his preaching effectual to an amazing and unwonted extent. That he had good natural talents, is unquestionable; but the entire abandonment of the wish to shine, was the most consum-

* To render the Hebrew letters familiar to him, he was accustomed for some time to write his journal in the characters of that language.

mate victory he ever achieved over the flesh. It was his glory to render himself a servant to all, so that he might win souls. He saw that the heart remained unchanged after the most studied harangues and eloquent orations. The weapons he wielded were, the mighty arms of faith and prayer; and when he beheld Satan's kingdom falling, and crumbling beneath their powerful energy, he scorned all adventitious aids, considering ornament as the destruction of their simplicity and effect.

He was frequently consulted both concerning temporal and spiritual things; and many derived peculiar benefit from his judicious and very friendly advice. He well knew how to "condescend to men of low estate," and the poorest members of society could approach him without the least embarrassment. Far from assuming an air of consequence or superiority whilst in the company of the humblest followers of Christ, he endeavoured by his endearing and affable conduct, to convince them that he was a friend and a brother. Abhorring the fashionable practice of pretending not to know a poor man in the streets, he heartily greeted him. And if his advice was sought about any matter, he would, if disengaged, stand and give it: if he was busy, he would kindly inform the person, that he could not then be detained, but would see him at any other opportunity. Some who were poor and godly, occasionally invited him to take tea with them. He always went if he was at liberty. Several friends and neighbours usually assembled, and great was the enjoyment which they had in each other's company. To the sick he was peculiarly attentive; and he made it his business to call on every Methodist family in the town, and also on as many in the country as he could conveniently visit.

It may not be uninteresting here to record an instance of his pastoral advice, given to three members of the society, who were band mates, one of whom has communicated the following particulars:—Well knowing that Mr. Bramwell was a man mighty in PRAYER, they were very desirous of conversing with him on that

important subject. They accordingly waited upon him, at his own house, early one morning, and asked him the following questions:—

1. In private prayer, we sometimes feel power to wrestle with the Lord for increasing salvation for ourselves, and for the extension of the kingdom of Christ; at other times we feel no such power, but rather are distracted, and our minds wander from the point in hand. What should we do in the latter case?

2. If we do not feel much liberty in prayer, should we nevertheless continue in the posture of kneeling?

3. Is what is called by some "burning love," to be attained *gradually* or *instantaneously*?

To these inquiries Mr. Bramwell very condescendingly made the following replies:—

"*First.*—When we find distraction in private prayer, we are often called upon to fight and wrestle, in order to obtain 'a mind stayed upon God.' And sometimes when it is suggested, that we should do something else, viz. read, &c, we ought resolutely to persevere in the path of duty; and when we conquer through Christ, those seasons are often the most profitable.

"*Secondly.*—Should we, however, still feel dissipated, we might then rise, and walk up and down in the room, and sing, or read some portion of the word of God, and then kneel down and pray again. Or if the body be weak, we may occasionally pray standing, or even sitting.

"*Thirdly.*—'Burning love,' that is, a warm glowing feeling in the heart, is no necessary consequence upon full salvation: it may exist with or without it. It is seldom given for more than a day or two: and then often previous to some peculiar trial, or some extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit."

Dr. Doddridge and some other pious men, have thought that vocal closet prayer is a practice to be preferred by some persons to silent mental devotion, because it tends to keep the attention awake, and preserve the thoughts from wandering. Mr. Bramwell was of the same opinion, and indulged in this beloved

spiritual exercise whenever he had an opportunity. Before five o'clock in the morning, he has been heard thus engaged in his own garden, by many persons, as they have been passing to their employment at that early hour. He seems to have resorted to this practice, when his fervent soul has been particularly led out in strong desire to praise *Him* whom it was his delight to magnify.

Herd-farm near Harewood, the residence of Richard Leak, Esq., was one of Mr. Bramwell's favourite places, when he was in this circuit. At the hospitable mansion of that respected gentleman, our ministers were accustomed, once in two weeks, to remain all night, after having preached at Allwoodley Gates. The situation is most delightful. Placed on a gentle eminence, the house is, at a small distance, nearly encircled on three of its sides by a fine wood, that gradually rises to a proud elevation above it. Penetrating into the depths of its most umbrageous retreats, Mr. Bramwell poured forth the feelings of his heart in loud and fervent supplications before the God of heaven. The tones of his strong and mellifluous voice reverberated through all the dells and glades; while the wild inmates of the wood were scared at "sounds unknown before." But they were the sounds of thanksgiving as well as those of entreaty. He has frequently been engaged there for four hours together, till some branch of the family, loath to disturb his devotions, has ventured into his beloved solitude, and invited him to partake of the prepared repast. Always gentle and obliging, he complied with the request; though the heavenly abstraction of his mind at such seasons seemed to say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of!" His voice was the clue by which they could generally discover the part which he had chosen for retirement; because when not engaged in prayer, (which act he reverently performed on his bended knees,) his meditations could be indistinctly heard,—for they were the utterance of the heart expressed aloud while he walked along the winding paths in the wood, almost every corner of

which, being bounded by streams, was favourable to echo.

Many were the points of resemblance between Mr. Bramwell and the Rev. Joseph Alleine, author of the "Alarm to the Unconverted;" and in nothing was this more apparent than in their mutual love of privacy for the purposes of prayer and praise. Mr. Alleine's biographer relates concerning him, "He spent a considerable part of his time in private converse with God and his own soul; he delighted very much to perform his secret devotions in the view of heaven, and in the open air, when he could find advantages fit for his purpose. He used to keep many days alone, and then a private room would not content him, but, if he could, he would withdraw himself to a solitary house, that had no inhabitant in it. And herein he was gratified often by some private friends of his, to whom he did not impart his design: perhaps it was, that he might freely use his voice as his affections led him, without such prudential considerations and restraints as would have been necessary in another place; and that he might converse with God without any avocation or distraction."*

"Neither did he so gaze upon and adore Christ his Redeemer, and his redemption, as to forget to sound forth the praises of God the Creator. For often he hath been heard, with admiration and praise, to take notice of the Divine power and wisdom in the works of creation; and therefore in the open air, in the private retirement of some field or wood, he delighted to address himself to God in praise, that his eyes might affect his heart, and awake his glory. And here often he has been heard to say, *that man was the tongue of the whole creation, appointed as the creature's interpreter, to speak forth and make articulate the praises which they but silently intimate.*"†

"And indeed had not his zeal for God's glory, and the salvation of souls, engaged him so much to an

* Alleine's Life and Letters, page 45. † Ibid. 168.

active life, he could have even lived and died wholly in divine contemplation and adoration; so much did he delight to shrink within himself, and to abandon the view of the desperate adventures and antic motions of a mad world; that so, being shut to these, he might only open his soul to God and glory, displaying it to the glorious beams of the Sun of righteousness. Therefore did he often delight in his devotions to converse with the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, since these were more innocent, and less degenerate than man.

"With streams and plants did he delight to walk, and all these did utter to his attentive ear the praise and knowledge of his Creator, and in his unsettled sojournings from place to place he did often (to use his words) *look back with sweetness and great content on the places of his former pleasant retirements*, setting, as it were, a mark upon those which had marvellously pleased him in his solitudes, by administering to his contemplative delight."*

"All the time of his health, he did rise constantly at or before four o'clock, and on the sabbath sooner, if he did wake. He would be much troubled if he heard any smiths, or shoemakers, or such tradesmen, at work at their trades before he was in his duties with God; saying to me often, 'O how this noise shames me! Doth not *my* Master deserve more than *theirs*?'"†

Mr. Bramwell's earnestness in preaching, and his powerful and successful pleadings at a throne of grace, soon attracted general attention. From his commencement at Leeds, nothing would satisfy him but to see the arm of the Lord revealed in the awakening and conversion of sinners. For this he wept, studied, fasted, prayed, and preached. Like the prophet Isaiah, he often exclaimed, "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." It was

* Alleine's Life and Letters, page 166. † Ibid. 170.

not long before he saw the fruit of his labours; the Lord poured out his Spirit; numbers were awakened; believers were quickened, and a very general revival took place in the society.

During the first year of his labours at Leeds, all the preachers were united in the work of God; and, according to the minutes of conference, there had been an increase of three hundred and seventy-one members. The following letters will show the state of Mr. Bramwell's mind at that period. The first was addressed to Mrs. Bramwell when she was at Kingswood for the purpose of seeing her three sons. She was detained there longer than she intended, in consequence of being bitten by a dog.

LETTER XIV.

To Mrs. Bramwell.

"Leeds, September 5, 1801.

"My Dear Ellen,—I am sorry, but I wait and instantly give you into the Lord's hands. I hope you are better. But do not attempt to come too soon, lest you should inflame your leg, and thereby make it so much longer in healing.

"I am still giving myself to continual prayer. I want you much; but the Lord knows how to try me, and his will be done! Write again immediately.—You will find a letter from me at Mr. Tatham's. In your next, tell me exactly how your leg is.

"Oh may I have power to wait for you with all patience and confidence in the Lord!—I have many things to say to you.—I hope our heavenly union will increase yet more and more. Amen! Were I to give way to my feelings, I should immediately come to see you. I am nearer heaven than ever; and this enables me to say, 'The Lord does all things well.' I pray for you continually. O get much more, before you see me.

"I am yours, most affectionately,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER XV.

To Miss Barrett.

"Thorner, November 17, 1801.

"My Dear Sister Barrett,—I heard of your being at Rochdale with success. I understand you have freedom at Manchester. You will do well in not staying there too long, except you visit other circuits, and then return for a season.

"I have long thought that your labours may be attended with greater and more lasting blessings, in the following way: Suppose you were to conclude sooner in the evening, go to rest sooner, and sometimes meet all that would come in the morning. A number who receive good through your labours, and who love you, sink deep into sloth from your example of lying in bed. Not considering your labours, but following your practice as a plea, they afterwards sink a whole society. I think this may be prevented. Unless the people improve time, they never can stand long; and the greatest mean in the world, is rising early, and spending some time with the Lord before worldly business commences. I want all your fruit to abide, or, at least, the greater part.

"Now, as the great work of our salvation depends on our diligence, and as the people will look at our example, even years after we leave them, is it not possible that you and all of us may show this example to the churches? But there can be no harm in trying: and this is the least you can do. *First*, to dismiss the people,—all who choose to go after preaching. *Then*, to have what kind of meeting you choose, but to dismiss them again in an hour. *Then*, to go yourself positively. If any remain in distress, leave the work in the hands of others. Retire, and as soon as you have got supper, go to rest; having previously published that you will meet all that will come, either in the chapel or in some house, in the morning. Let this be sometimes done, but never lie long in the morning, unless you be sick. You will stand your labour better, by being often at it, than by being too long at the same time.

"God is working at Leeds, and in some other places. We have drops.

"I beg you will write immediately, and let me know the state of the churches. I am praying for you. I am seeking to be ready.

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XVI.

To Miss Barrett.

"MY DEAR SISTER BARRETT,—From a full persuasion of your call in an extraordinary way, and believing that the design of God concerning you, is to spread the flame of heavenly love in our connexion,—I write to you with all freedom on a certain subject, which has given me much concern. I understand you have some serious thoughts about marrying. I am led to think that this proceeding would prevent the design of the Almighty concerning you.

"Fully understand me; I do not mean that it is wrong to marry, but I think it would prevent in you the answering that great end of your call.

"In the *first* place, your situation would become *local*. Now, I am certain that this is not your place with respect to doing general good. You would soon become in a great degree useless.

"In the *next* place, you may have the cares of a family; but you would not have that influence among numbers of your own sex.

"I conceive you can only think of altering your state upon one ground,—and that is, 'I am become obsolete! My work is done! I am shut out! I can do no more! I am called to give it up.' If you think so, I think differently. A number of places will yet receive you; and I think your way is more open this conference than ever it has been. I beg that you will write me all your heart; and, if you please, I will immediately consume your letter after reading it, and will keep the whole in my own mind.

"As I am concerned for you, write soon.

"I am quite ignorant at the present why the Lord has kept me here.—Things are low indeed in this circuit; and means must have been used to make them as they are. Of this we will say nothing; only, pray for me.

"I must in a few weeks, if spared, strike home, and leave the whole to God. I see hell will rise: but our God is almighty. Keep this letter in your own mind. I beg that you will come this way and go with me to several places before you go, or as you go to Nottingham. I have found much fruit in Birstal circuit. The Lord bless you. Amen! "Yours, &c,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XVII.

To Mrs. Bramwell.

"Harewood, April 14, 1802.

"MY DEAR ELLEN,—I received your letter—am thankful to our heavenly Father for his care over you. All things are in peace at Leeds. I think twenty received liberty when Mr. Miller was there. I am much better of my cold; but not well in my back, yet, I think, no worse.

"You must do all you can this journey; leave nothing undone. Write immediately, and let me know when you will come home. I am not certain that I can meet you, but will, if possible. It has been much on my mind, that you may live as Ann Cutler, and I as John Fletcher. Let us follow them, and begin immediately. I believe I have a call for us both.

"Oh that God may save some of that family!

"I am yours affectionately,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XVIII.

To Mr. Taft.

"Leeds, May 27, 1802.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You must have no doubt upon your mind respecting my regard for you and

yours. I am ever the same towards you both, though I have not written so frequently as I ought to have done. I never was more employed than I have been this year.

"I suppose Mary is gone from Margate. I hope light will shine upon her path in all things; and nothing can be better than to wait and see every open door of providence. The Lord sent her into Kent. I see your union was of God.—In several things I am so persuaded, that I have never had the least uneasiness on this head.

"No great work can be done without much opposition. Never look for peace whilst you proclaim war. I do not know how things will turn out at Manchester. But the Lord reigneth; and he is, I am sure, our God. Fear none of those things. Stand still, and see the salvation of God. I often do the most in doing nothing. Pray much, and for me—especially at this time.

"Numbers are saved in Leeds; but I do not see one yard before me. God must provide, or all is over!—But he will. Faith claims him for our all.

"Yours, as ever,

"Wm. Bramwell."

Considering Mr. Bramwell's ardent desire for the salvation of men, how must he have rejoiced to see Zion in prosperity, and the society dwelling in amity and peace! But, alas! how imperfect is our knowledge of futurity! Very soon after having written the two preceding letters, he was called to meet a most tremendous storm. It is certainly a wise ordination of Providence, that we know not what shall happen to us on the morrow. It is probable, that if mankind had a clear view of the trials and difficulties with which they might have to contend during their pilgrimage through this chequered scene, life would prove a burden too heavy for many to bear. It is therefore highly becoming, to bow to the Almighty Disposer of all events, and instead of wishing to pry into futurity, to endeavour patiently to submit to the dispensations of Providence.

improving and enjoying the present moment, without anticipating future trials. 'Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof.'

During the last year of his ministry at Leeds, Mr. Bramwell was called to peculiar and embarrassing trials, as will appear from the following letter:

LETTER XIX.

To Mr. Taft.

"Leeds, November 30, 1802.

"My Dear Taft,—I thank God for the consolation. He has delivered you, and will deliver even to the end. Salvation is of the Lord. Give him all the glory; and, if you keep quite humble, he will preserve you from every word and work which has the least tendency to excite disgust.—You know not what you have to do. One day of your life, will, in future, tell for ever. Be always on your watch tower, and continue in prayer, and you will see greater things than these.

"I see still greater things in Leeds. Many are saved in the town, not so many in the country. I have not the help I want. I say sometimes, 'Wo is me! for I am a man beset with opposition from all the powers of hell!' You would be surprised what plans I have discovered to prevent the general crush; but I see shakings through the whole. The work does not extend as I could wish. Here I mourn and wait the hour.

"I never lived so much with God as at present. I can say, 'My life is prayer, and much in agony.' I am waiting for my change; and yet, I sometimes think, my greatest work is to come.—Oh may I be ready for life or death!

"I do assure you, you have numbers of friends, who will help you and your dear partner, by their prayers. Fear not; and while I fast, you will find it needful to live well. Be cheerful and thankful.—Give my kind love to Mr. and Mrs. Grace. Tell Mr. Grace I have never forgotten our prayer meetings in his parlour, how

he used to wrestle with God. Give my love to my dear friend Manger, and to my brethren. Write immediately, and let me know every thing.

"Our dear love to sister Taft. I beg that she may never faint. I do live, if she stand fast in the Lord.

"I am your most affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

"N. B. We have had such a work in one street as I have seldom seen; many amongst those who were the worst, are now become the best."

Mr. Bramwell's feelings and conduct during the period to which this refers, are so accurately described by Mr. Dawson in the funeral sermon which he preached on the occasion of his death, that it will appear quite unnecessary to detail them in this place.

After Mr. Bramwell left Leeds, he was stationed in the Wetherby circuit, at the conference in 1803. He was received by the people with the greatest satisfaction. Many were the seals of his ministry there; and doubtless he has rejoined numbers in the celestial world, to whom, whilst in that circuit, his labours were rendered eminently useful. His attention to the general duties of the ministry continued constant and undeviating. In all things he appeared as a minister of the Lord Jesus, and gave the most indubitable proofs that the Lord was with him.

His usual fervour burns in the following letters:

LETTER XX.

To Mrs. Z. Taft.

"Wetherby, 1803.

"MY DEAR SISTER TAFT,—I thank you for your letter. I am glad to hear from you, and of your well-doing. The Lord continue his goodness, and ever succeed your labours with the salvation of souls! How kind the Lord has been in your deliverance, and in blessing you and the dear child! Oh! praise Him for ever! The Lord continue his goodness to you all, and may we all be ready for every event!

"Now is the time for receiving the meetness for the highest place in glory. I am with all my soul striving every day, and never enjoyed greater power and love. Glory! glory!

"In all the conflict the Divine presence was with me; and I had a testimony that I was doing what the Lord commanded. I shall have the full reward, in giving up all, yea all friends, for that season. Pray, ever pray, for me and mine! We love you more than ever.

"That rule should not have been submitted to.—This I advise, and had all the friends stood firm, it would never have been made. But as it is made, and complied with, I would advise you to act according to it in every thing, whilst in the connexion.—This is right,—Whilst in the body, to submit to all rules made by that body.

"We want you here; will you come? Write. Mr. Rayson will come for you. I see souls saved nearly every night; but oh! the death of this circuit!—every day is an agony to raise any. We have had a great love feast at Wetherby, and I expect glory at Keswick next Sunday.

"Mr. Wilson and Mr. Rayson's family, and numbers besides, all unite with me in great respect, and wish to see you. My wife joins me in love to you, to Mr. Taft, and Mary Ann, to your brother and sister. I am in haste. But believe me to be

"Your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XXI.

To Mr. Taft.

"Tadcaster, February 24, 1804.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I waited long for an answer to my letter. I am truly thankful God is with you, and shall be with you. Oh, never grieve the Lord! Watch,

pray, and improve time to the utmost. Live in all the union, the love, the great salvation. Time is short. Be a man of God,—none more holy or more devoted to God.—I am quite given to him.—I feel my dependence upon Him every moment. I was never more dead to all below. My soul is all love indeed. Praise my Saviour for ever! I saw a blessed work at Whitby, &c. I see souls saved nearly every night in this circuit.—At Wetherby not many.

"I should change with Mr. Nelson a month. Mr. Muff has sent for me: scores are saved in his circuit, and he is all alive.

"My wife joins in love, with many friends. I think Mrs. Taft should come and show herself once more. Write to me, and pray much for me.

"I am yours, as ever,

"Wm. Bramwell."

In the year 1804, Mr. Bramwell was appointed to the Hull circuit, with Mr. Griffith and Mr. S. Taylor. The preachers were closely united, and the work of the Lord prospered. Mr. Bramwell laboured with all his might to bring souls to Christ. His ministry was very acceptable; numbers were converted, and the society in general quickened. When he was in the country part of the circuit, he frequently remained all night, by which means he had an opportunity of visiting the members, and of speaking to them concerning the great work of salvation. In this way his labours were rendered eminently useful, because he gained the affections of the people, and they were then prepared to receive instruction, according to their peculiar circumstances. In this circuit there were many remarkable answers to his fervent prayers, one or two of which it may not be improper to record:—

In the frost of 1804 and 5, Mr. Brayshaw, of Hull, had the misfortune to fall, and pitch upon his right elbow. Not finding much inconvenience at the time, he neglected to apply any thing to it, until about the middle of February, when a mortification ensued. So

rapid was its progress, that his medical attendants had determined to amputate his arm as soon as he should have sufficient strength to undergo the operation. They probed and laid it open to the bone; but so much was nature exhausted, that it was feared at every subsequent dressing he would have died. An asthmatical cough, to which he had been long subject, then suddenly stopped;—a convulsive hiccup came on; and all hopes of his recovery were lost. His family were called in; he took an affectionate leave of them; and gave them, as he thought, his last blessing. At this important crisis, Messrs. Griffith and Bramwell called to see him, as they were going to the select band. Mrs. Brayshaw requested they would remember her husband at a throne of grace in the band meeting. And whilst they were engaged at the meeting in agonizing prayer for his recovery, Mr. Brayshaw began to cough, the hiccup left him, and his asthmatical cough returned; so that he recovered to the great surprise of all around him. A friend called after the band meeting, and observed, that she was almost sure that Mr. Brayshaw would recover,—for there had been such an uncommon outpouring of the Spirit, accompanied by such faith whilst prayer was made by those men of God for his recovery, that she had no doubt concerning his restoration. The event proved the correctness of her opinion; and it was generally thought to be a miraculous cure in answer to prayer.

The following account has been received from Mr. Thomas Ryder, local preacher of Thorngumbald:

"In the year 1805, our daughter Abigail was so very ill of the hooping cough, that at times she appeared to lose her breath, and my wife often thought she was dead. Mr. Bramwell was in the Hull circuit; and when in that part of Holderness where we then lived he slept in our house. At one of his visits, we told him how violently our little girl was afflicted. He asked several questions concerning her, and then said, 'Let us pray!' We knelt down, and the man of God prayed with peculiar fervour, and apparently in strong

faith, that the Lord would bless the child, and speedily restore her. The Almighty, whose eyes are over the righteous, and whose ears are open to their prayers, heard and answered the prayer of his servant. Our daughter began to recover from that hour, and never afterwards had a severe attack."

He was deeply interested in the comfort and happiness of those amongst whom he laboured; and it appears very remarkable, that when any of his Christian friends were peculiarly tempted or called to pass through heavy trials, their afflictions were often revealed to him. This will be better understood by the following account, transmitted by Mr. Everett, who is now stationed in Sheffield: "After being in the country part of the circuit, Mr. Bramwell was returning home from Cottingham; on arriving in Hull he dismounted from his horse, and instead of going to his own house as usual, he went to Mr. Adams's.—'Come,' said he to Mrs. Adams, 'tell me the state of your mind. You have been unusually impressed upon my mind all the way from Cottingham.' Mrs. Adams was in very deep distress, occasioned by a peculiar temptation, under which she was then labouring. When she had stated her case to Mr. Bramwell, he said to her, 'Let us pray! For the Lord is about to bring deliverance.' They knelt down, he wrestled with God, the snare was broken, and she was completely delivered."—The circumstance which renders this account more worthy of observation, is, that Mr. Bramwell had no previous knowledge of her temptation.

Mr. Triebner, an aged Lutheran minister, frequently went to the Methodist chapel while Mr. Bramwell was in Hull. A friend one day asked him, "Mr. Triebner how do you like Mr. Bramwell's preaching?" And possibly anticipating an objection, said, "Does he not often wander from his subject?" "Yes," replied the venerable old gentleman, "he do wander most delightfully from de subject to de heart."

His letters show him to be in this circuit the same earnest, heavenly minded minister of Jesus Christ.

LETTER XXII.

To Mr. Wm. Burrows.

"Hull, October, 1804.

"My Dear Brother,—I hope you are going on in the same way, and much increasing in the love of God. Nothing can prevent your receiving the mind of Christ. Turn all into this, yea, all your concerns. Seek God in all, and acknowledge him in all. He will be with you and yours.—You will have to do all the good you can, with the greatest patience; and be willing to be blamed for your best actions.—'Behold the Lamb of God!' Live near to him, and be patient in all.

"I have had three weeks of agony, but now see the Lord working.—I have not preached lately without seeing some fruit of my labour. The Lord is saving souls. Oh that nothing may hinder! Pray, pray much for me! The Lord bless you.

"I remain your brother,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER XXIII.

To Mr. Cranswick.

"Hull, November 29, 1804.

"My Dear Brother Cranswick,—I think of you and the families every day. I frequently want to know how you all are. Satan will use a thousand means to damp our love. He will strive to make all things bear a gloomy aspect; and will tell you that you may as well give it up, and that neither Deighton* nor any other place will ever be better. But though you cannot save all or many, yet one soul saved is of the greatest importance. The churches, though small, are of infinite value. Remember your own salvation: never sink!

* Deighton is a village in the Wetherby circuit, where Mr. Cranswick then lived.

never lose the least prayer. It is praying continually, that keeps the mind. I am more convinced of this than ever. Oh! Let God have the first and the last! Your dear wife and all your precious little children are his: strive to lay them all in his arms every morning; make the act on your knees. God will answer. He will make all your way plain. You will see his glory. I know it is a strife indeed, to keep full amidst unbelief. Do all your work about the house, with as few words as possible; but still be kind to all, even to the unthankful;—you will find the great benefit of this. Live to God; be entirely given up to him in all things. The Lord continue his blessing upon you all! I wish to see you soon. Oh let us take each other into God, and never break the heavenly union!

"I am your affectionate brother,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER XXIV.

To Mrs. Baiston.

"Hull, January 4, 1806.

"My Dear Sister,—The bearer, Mrs. Helmsley, will be a sweet companion for you, will meet your class, and help you in the blessed way. We have had her much at Hull: she has been remarkably useful. I hope the Lord will be with her among the friends at Leeds.

"I understand you are doing well in your own mind. But ever remember what great things the Lord can do for us. O the veil that is upon us, till the increasing light shines! And I am astonished, how little we can know at once. Yet do not faint, do not grow weary, still strive. The greatest salvation is yours, only receive. For if it is step by step, you will at least gain one every day; and this will shortly bring you into all the fulness of God. Be always labouring; and labour will be joyful, yea exceedingly joyful.

"My dear sister, do rise a little more early. Do you

strive to have all things ready for the day? I do not mean for two days, (you will not bear that,) but for one day. 'Take no thought for the morrow.' If you receive what I call 'the full composure' in the morning, the mind stayed upon God, the solid rest,—this will carry you into all your little concerns with the utmost patience, and the daily cross will be the blessed means of increasing your heaven. And this is a constant heaven; this is your place to have God your all. I have seen much more lately. I can say to you, I live here; I dwell in God, and wonder that I did not feel, what I now feel, twenty years ago.—But (praise God!) all is well.—My kind love to Mr. Baiston.

"I am your dear brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

With the following very judicious letter to a young preacher, we will close this chapter. The advice which it offers to him, is very important; and one part of it reminds us of the following anecdote:—

The servant of a celebrated doctor of divinity had gone to hear the Rev. George Whitefield; and on his return was thus interrogated by his master, who did not greatly relish Mr. W.'s popularity. "Well, John! what are your thoughts about Mr. Whitefield?" "*Oh, sir!*" said John, "he is a wise preacher, a very wise preacher,"—"Yes," rejoined his master, "he is a wise preacher; but there are preachers possessed of greater wisdom than he is."—"That may be," resumed John, "yet he is a very wise preacher."—His master retired into his study, and in a little time rung for John. When he came, he said to him, "John, he that winneth souls is wise: Mr. Whitefield is indeed a very wise preacher."

LETTER XXV.

To Mr. Joseph Wilson.

"Hull, July 4, 1806.

"MY DEAR JOSEPH,—You have frequently been greatly upon my mind. I was much afraid you went

out too soon; but I hope every thing has turned out for the glory of God, the good of your own soul, and for the salvation of numbers. I do pray, that this blessed end may be answered in all your labours. The Lord can and will help you, if your eye be single.

"This is the time for your improvement. Give yourself entirely to the work. Rise early. Continue in prayer, in earnest prayer. Keep all your life, all your zeal; yet never be wild. Go on your way. Speak evil of none. Never debate about the work. 'Be a lamb dumb; open not your mouth.' Live in entire sanctification,—all your heart God's throne. Never grieve him, or cause him to depart from you. Take care how you act towards women: keep your eyes, your heart, from wandering. Determine, if you need it, upon fasting. Keep your body under. Be dead to all. Be a man of God. I believe I shall have joy, great joy on your account. May it be so for ever!

"Procure Blair's Lectures; they will cost you more than a pound. Read them with much care. Keep to plain words, yet not mean ones. Strive to save souls in every sermon. 'They are the best preachers who bring souls to God.'

"If you should go to Leeds, I shall have the comfort of seeing you. If not, write me a letter to Leeds, saying in it all your mind. Give my kind love to Mr. Blanshard. The Lord bless you evermore! Many souls are turning to God here.

"I am your dear brother in Christ Jesus,

"Wm. Bramwell."

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Bramwell's travels and success in the Sunderland circuit—His Christian moderation—Anecdotes—Letters—His appointment to the Liverpool circuit—Letters.

At the conference in 1806, Mr. Bramwell was stationed in the Sunderland circuit. In consequence of the peculiar notions of his predecessor, Mr. Cooke,

who had been very popular there, the society was much agitated. On Mr. Bramwell's arrival, he found that the greatest caution and prudence would be necessary, in order to preserve the members from biting and devouring each other. Having on former occasions experienced the benefit of profound silence respecting disputes, he resolved that he would neither speak nor hear any thing concerning Mr. Cooke's errors. He also enjoined silence on the subject of the controversy on his colleagues, and determined never to introduce it either in public or in private. When one of the preachers sent him some pamphlets written in answer to Mr. Cooke, he would not allow them to be circulated, but returned them to the author.

While he thus persevered in occupying peaceful ground, the disturbance was almost instantly quashed, and his way was made clear and plain before him. He now began to exert himself, as usual, to win souls to Christ. To effect this he used every possible means. He frequently met the societies, held prayer meetings after preaching, and desired the people to pray. In love feasts, he always exhorted the people to declare their present experience in few words; and sometimes took the liberty of telling the loquacious that they had spoken long enough. He often cautioned the people against long speaking about the *past* when they had but little to say concerning the *present*. By these means variety was introduced. He sometimes called persons by name to speak. When there was great backwardness at band meetings, he would begin at one end of the room and go through the whole assembly, asking all of them the state of their minds.

So ardently did he long for the salvation of sinners, that, when walking with a friend in the streets, he would suddenly leave him and go to warn, encourage, or exhort other persons who were passing at the same time, and to many of whom he was unknown. Early one morning when he was returning from a village in which he had been preaching the preceding night, he met a friend, and said, "O my brother! How much I

feel condemned in my mind! The little feathered songsters of the grove have been awake and employed in the praises of God an hour or two before I arose."

While he was in this circuit, he and one of his colleagues met at the house of a worthy and respectable friend, where they continued all night. At that time the family was brought into a very low state. The owner of the habitation in which they lived, wished to get it into his own possession for some other purpose. This would have been attended with very painful and distressing circumstances, because no other place could have been procured which would have suited them so well. During the course of the evening, Mr. Bramwell was made acquainted with the whole affair. After performing family worship in a way which will not soon be forgotten, he and his colleague retired, and spent nearly the whole night in prayer for these good people. In a short time afterwards, affairs were most unexpectedly overruled for their good, in a manner for which they could not account. But they believe this change was effected in direct answer to Mr. Bramwell's prayers, for "the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

It will appear from the following letters that he did not thus labour in vain, or spend his strength for nought:

LETTER XXVI.

To Mr. J. Armitage.

"Durham, November 3, 1806.

"My Dear Brother,—I received your kind letter. I praise God that my dear sister Armitage is so much recovered. I hope she will pray always, and her soul will grow abundantly. Say to her for me, 'Be ready, yea, be always ready.' The Lord bless her more and more! I am at the present given to prayer. A great prospect offers in this circuit.—Cooke's chaff had nearly blinded the people. Crowds come to hear; their eyes begin to be open. In one love feast last

Sunday, there was a great shower,—ten persons were brought into liberty. I do not know how it may end. If as it begins, we shall have a great work.

"We have too good a house in Sunderland, and the friends are too kind. I have had to watch and fast, or should soon have been ruined with good things. I hope you continue to pray much, and would have you determine to improve your preaching. I know you may. Read, write, study, when you have proper time. Live in nothing short of a clean heart. Be kind to all; but submit to none in lightness, &c, &c. Be a weighty man of God. You have much to do. Do all to the Lord. Lose nothing in your business;—I mean, lose no ground when in your business. You need not.

"Write to me. I love you and yours. I will pray for you and be with you in glory. Amen!

"Yours, &c,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER XXVII.

To Mr. W. Burrows.

"Sunderland, 1806.

"My Dear Brother,—I thank my Lord Jesus for the information I receive from you on the subject of the kingdom of God. The salvation is nearer than when we believed. O what shall we do our Saviour to love? I grieve that my love is no stronger, that I am no more like him. I wonder at his glory and sink before him with shame. How is it, that the soul being of such value, and God so great, eternity so near, and yet we so little moved? You perhaps can answer me this.

"I never was so much struck with the word of God as at the present. The truth, the depth, the promises, quite swallow me up. I am lost in wonder and praise. My soul enters into Christ in this blessed book. His own sayings take faster hold of me than ever.—I could read and weep, and love and suffer; yea, what could I not suffer when I thus see him? Justification is

great,—to be cleansed is great,—but what is justification or the being cleansed, when compared with this being taken into himself? The world, the noise of self,—all is gone; and the mind bears the full stamp of God's image: here you talk, and walk, and live,—doing all in him and to him. Continual prayer, and turning all into Christ in every house, in every company,—all things by him, from him, and to him!

"O my dear brother! I hope you are doing well,—prospering in health, in your family, in business, in salvation. You will have the daily inconvenience; but this will be the grand means, yea the loud voice,—'Pray! pray!' and continue in it, plead in it, weep in it, groan in it.—You know the way; yea the Lord hath shown you the gospel, the great salvation, and you cannot rest as others, be happy as others. No; you must have all; and nothing less than all will quiet your mind. Never grow faint. Keep the same action, the same labour for the good of souls, the burning love, which will make you rise early, yea and sometimes late take rest. If things grow slack, Satan suggests 'nothing can be done!'—I answer, 'much may be done!' Ploughing, sowing, weeding, pruning, &c, &c, may be done; and this will give us hope of a blessed harvest. Go on, do all in love; but go on, never grow weary in well doing.

"The Lord is good to us: I have seen four hundred brought into society, and I believe nearly all saved from evil. The work, I can truly say to you, is in general deepening through the circuit. Nothing was known about entire sanctification; and on this ground I yet mourn. But we have got a band just begun, and I hope all will receive the blessing. Pray for me! And beg that I may live in all the will of God. I think my wife has stronger faith; her classes are all in a flame. I want to see you; but I am quite uncertain respecting the time: do give our dear love to Mrs. Burrows, to dear Miss Burrows, to William, John, and my little Josiah. The Lord be with the family, and preserve

our children! Give my love to all the preachers, as they come to you.

"I am your brother, as ever,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XXVIII.

To Mr. J. Hanwell.

"Sunderland, December 6, 1806.

"MY DEAR JOHN,—I was glad to hear from you, that the Lord is with you and doing good in the circuit. I bless the Lord that the sun shines a little on Bridlington. Surely God is ready to make all things new, and will be with all who have a single eye and labour to save men. I know that it is no proof of your not being called to the work, when you see yourself so unfit, and feel so much ashamed before God. At sixteen we think we know; at twenty we think we know much; but if we increase in true knowledge, we shall know ourselves to be nothing. Nothing could induce me to continue in the work, but 'wo be to me if I preach not the gospel!' Write all your mind to me again as soon as you think proper.

"The Lord is pleased to help us here. I have seen at the least one hundred brought into liberty. Twenty soldiers are made acquainted with the Lord. A number of them have received pardon, but there has not a great number joined the society yet. The prospect is great.

"Rise early. Keep a match box. Never be in bed late, unless you are obliged to sit up late. Pray! Read! Pray!

"I am your dear brother, as ever,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XXIX.

To Mrs. Pawson.

"Sunderland, January, 1808.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am waiting for my change. I can say, I long for it. I have been preaching two

funeral sermons this week, for two eminent Christians; and my soul, at the time, received such a view of that glory which they now enjoy, that earth and all things in it, were swallowed up in God. I must say to my dear mother in the gospel, 'I now live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

"I have been for some months labouring to attain to that point,—for nothing for one moment to divert me from God. The Lord has given me this blessing. I now feel the full effect of that passage, 'he dwells in God, and God in him.' I live in God. O what views have I in this state! Creation, redemption, full salvation, the state of the world!—I grieve, but it is in God. I rejoice, but it is in God. I speak, but I find it is in God. I am tempted much, but unmoved in God. Oh how I long for all the church to know this great salvation! And yet I can bear with the weak more than ever. I am greatly ashamed; sometimes I blush before the Lord. I can do nothing without him. I find him on my side and he gives me most striking deliverances. I wonder that God can love me. How is it? But I can adore the Lamb of God.

"My dear Mrs. Pawson, what shall we do to persuade the church into this union? To be cleansed from sin, is great indeed; but to receive the inward glory, in its full influence,—this is the salvation. The Lord waits to impart every thing he has promised; and would as a kind father, rather, much rather that his children had the whole.—I hope you are going on. Fear not; he has saved and protected you, and he will do it to the end. Remember, instead of going from the outward to the inward, we are, as a body, going from the inward to the outward splendour,—which has been too much the case with all churches. The Lord be with you!

"I am your affectionate brother,

"William Bramwell."

LETTER XXX.

To Mr. R. Pilter.

"Sunderland, March 7, 1808.

"My Dear Brother,—It has been much upon my mind to write to you. I remember with gratitude the information you gave me respecting my friends in Kent. How you are going on this year I do not know; but I hope the Lord is still with you and blessing you in all your labours. Our work as ministers of the gospel is of such importance, that I frequently tremble exceedingly before I go into the pulpit. Yea, I wonder how I ever dared to engage in such a work. Yet when I am labouring to speak a little, I am frequently so much overpowered with the Divine presence, that I would not leave my work for all the world. O how merciful is God our Saviour! He 'strengthens our weak hands. He will save us.'

"Go on, my dear brother; preach, pray, purge, and plant. Do all in God, and he will stand by you, and work amongst the people. I hope you see the propriety of the improvement of time. Perhaps 'early to bed and early to rise,' may be the best. I do not know whether you will need more than six hours. I say 'six hours in bed.' This has been sufficient for me for many years. If you find that you can do with so little bed, you have time for all things. What is it you cannot receive? What is it you cannot bear? What is it you cannot do? Live, my brother, in entire sanctification. Be cleansed from sin. Live, my brother, in love, yea, in the fulness of God. Live to be a workman. Do all the will of God in the churches. You will go through the circuit seeking souls. Nothing but souls brought to God will satisfy. You will save yourself and those that hear you.

"All is well here, through the goodness of God,—your relations,—the church. Numbers are turning to

God; but, I think, not so many in Sunderland as there were in the last year. Great crowds come to hear. The chapel is now one of the largest. All the seats are let: a pleasing sight! Oh to be ready! I labour—I strive—I do grow a little—I live in God. He is all. Oh the union, the heaven! I never saw myself so little; yet I am 'kept by his mighty power.' Lord, help me and all thy followers to sing thy praises for ever! May I meet you in glory! Amen!

"I remain your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XXXI.

To Mr. J. Robinson.

"Sunderland, April 15, 1808.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I saw your mother this morning, who desired I would write to you. I understand that you are quite satisfied you are in your place; I mean as a travelling preacher—a work which makes me, even to the present time, tremble in the presence of God. I am still persuaded, that nothing can support us but that Almighty power which raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. Yet it is quite possible for you and me to make this a worldly business, that it may become so formal, as to create in us no more concern than any common business in life. Shall the Lord ordain us to this heavenly calling? Shall he empower us with the spirit of zeal and of power? Shall he send us forth into this labour, to save sinners from everlasting damnation? And shall we, after all, lose the true spirit of our calling? How can we then give in our account? How shall we stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Nothing less than the improvement of time, talents, &c, &c, can give us the least plea in that day.

"Consider this, my dear brother, and strictly examine yourself. Do you rise about four o'clock every

morning? In order to this, do you retire to rest as soon as your work and eating are over? Or do you sit and chat with the people? Do you give yourself to reading and prayer! I say GIVE, 'give yourself to these.' Are you never in company above an hour at once? And, when in company, do you turn all into profit, into religion? Are you a man of God in spirit, in word, in deed? Do you feel a clear witness of entire sanctification,—the cleansing blood? And do you declare this and walk in it?

"I want you also to be a preacher. And, in order to this, would it not be well to read the Scriptures without a comment, find out the breadth and length, depth and height, by digging, prayer, and receiving light from God? Whoever depends on comments will be very superficial, and will never speak with proper confidence. You may sometimes examine a comment after your own labour, to see what difference, &c, but never before it. Write something every day: have a book for the purpose; and never lose one idea which the Lord in mercy gives you. In preaching, never be tedious: the world never did, and never will bear that which is tedious. Let your introduction be a short opening to your sermon. An introduction is to prepare the people to receive what you have to say. Let your sermon be clear and strong, reaching every heart. 'Save thyself and them that hear thee.'

"If you have no end in view but the bringing souls to God,—this will cure almost every thing. Strive to bring some home in every sermon. God will be with you, and he will bless you. He will give you the desire of your heart. Be neat and clean in all your clothes; never foppish or fine. Have every thing consistent with your Lord Jesus. Set him before you at all times. Never be ceremonious; yet learn a good address. Be courteous, be kind, never gloomy, never light or trifling. O my brother, live for eternity; the Lord is at hand. Be ready every moment for glory; ever as willing to leave this earth, as to go to sleep. Give my love, my wife's love, and John's kind love, to

my dear brother Midgley, and to sister Midgley. Pray, pray, pray, and never cease.

"I am yours affectionately,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER XXXII.

To Mrs. Baiston.

"Sunderland, 1808.

"My Dear Sister,—I have long had it upon my mind to write to you. This may be because of our former union in Christ Jesus. For I hope this union will continue with us, yea never be broken. Can we receive a meetness for eternal glory? And can we receive this meetness for glory, while on earth, even in such a short time? Can we in a moment secure an everlasting crown? O my sister, who would trifle, who would suffer any object in this world to divert them from the reward—the full reward? I am frequently astonished that any enlightened person should make provision for the body, in such a way as to hinder in the least measure the glorious recompense.

"You will view mountains; and, in looking to God, you will reach their tops. But in little things, you will use your own strength, and sink to the bottom. Christ Jesus hath told us, that nothing can be done separately from him; and yet we forget the caution, and lose our way. Every thing requires prayer; and, if we pray in every thing, we shall always find cause for thanksgiving to God. Keep your proper lookout or view. Keep your continued acts of faith. Keep your utmost patience: for, in seeing, believing, and being resigned, all your enemies will fall before you. My sister, as it respects our great salvation, we have nothing to do with those who began before us, or with those who came in after us,—with counsel from man or with the experience of others, unless these corroborate the testimony. It is plainly what God says; for, all he hath said he will do. Set your foot upon the

Rock; fix your eye upon the promise; and, with your hand lay hold of the purchased blessing. It must come, it must all come. Nothing less than ALL is yours.

"Nothing does my soul more good than to see my fellow Christians claiming their own,—that which is with God laid up against their return. When you receive this cup of salvation, the effect will be,—the clamour of self is over; the slavish fear of being nothing is over; the soul keeps its place in God; and is ready for all that can come upon it. It bears, it forbears; it thinks no evil; it cannot dwell or live here.

"Oh this heaven of God's presence! this opening into glory! this weeping over a lost world! this being willing to lay down your life for the Church! 'God is all.' Oh my soul, I feel its fire, its burning, as I write. God grant the flame may spread, the glory shine! May the world receive it! Places to me are less than ever. Devoted souls are my delight. To see my friends dwelling in God, and God in them, affords me one of the greatest earthly pleasures. Go on, my dear sister, go on; the crown is before you. A few more battles, and heaven is won. The Lord Jesus grant that you may never faint! Will you write and let me know all things concerning yourself, my dear brother Baiston, and friends? I long to meet you all in yonder bright world. Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XXXIII.

To Mr. Preston.

"Sunderland, 1808.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Nothing in this world can equal the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially when the love of God becomes the ruling principle of the soul. To struggle with outward sin is hard work. To fight with the risings of evil nature, is hard work. But when the soul receives the all-cleansing blood,

when the mind enjoys this indwelling God, when he reigns alone,—then we find the great benefit of salvation: all is quiet, all is calm,—you stand unmoved. Water, fire, devils, men, cannot all disturb your rest. Besides you are prepared for every work, can preach, pray, &c, &c, and leave all to Him. Some say, 'It is good,'—others 'middling,'—others 'very bad:' you can still say, 'Glory!' and proceed with your work. Happy man! Happy work! Happy end!

"I hope you have fallen into no decline, given up no part of your faith or your union with God. Shall such a man flee, and so many souls going to hell? Can you bear to see the world sink lower? It is low enough. We must by the grace of God, at least have a few, as brands from the fire. If you gain one in a month, see your crown of glory; and if nothing else will stimulate your soul to perpetuate this blessed work, let the place in the city of God ever stir you up to magnify the Lord in your body, whether it be by life or by death. I believe you have not yet received the promise, I mean all the promise. I know that all things are so delightful when we enter the country, that we shall be occupied in gazing on the flowers, instead of pressing into all the glory, which you will ever find in the centre—GOD. To be swallowed up in him, is your glory. Do not stay, because others do. Give kind words to all, but tarry with none. Every thing you have to do on earth will now be a step to heaven. Business will smile with the presence of God. You will see HIM in all things, and you cannot do any thing without HIM. Live, my dear brother, with Abraham in believing, with Elias in prayer, with Daniel in courage, with John in love, with Paul in feeling for the world. Remember 'night and day with tears.' In general, debates are fruitless. If possible, keep from them, though on the purest subjects. Whoever thinks differently from you, be the same kind and affectionate friend to them. Bless them who curse. The Lord be with you.

"Yours, &c,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XXXIV.

To Mr. Dunn.

"Sunderland, February 7, 1807.

"My Dear Brother,—If you had not been provided for, I should have sent for you here, as we have called a fourth preacher, and altered this circuit to what I think the most comfortable I was ever in—a fortnight in and a fortnight out. We have three chapels in: one the size of Hull large chapel, another the same with Scott-street, and a third larger. I have seen more than one hundred souls brought into liberty. About two hundred joined us the last quarter, sixty of whom were soldiers,—lions turned into lambs. Such a work of God in the army, I have not seen before; and it spreads. I wonder at the power of God among these men. Seventy now meet in class, and are proved to be quite changed. A revival is beginning in several places. At Durham we have laid the foundation for a new chapel; which will cost about two thousand pounds. A gentleman (not in society,) who heard the word, offered one hundred pounds and land. I think it will not be burdened. I am exceedingly followed by Satan, and much tempted; but I do, upon the whole, grow in the grace of God. The Lord keep me and my brethren!

"I hope you will be quite comfortable amongst the Wetherby friends till conference. Do give my kind love to them in every place. I love them much, and I hope to see them by some means before it is long. My dear brother, read, write, rise early. Give all into the Lord's hands, and your way will be plain, your soul will be alive, your labours will be crowned with success. Time is short, the earth trembles, the mountains shake; yet 'God is with us,' and he will be in us. Pray for me. I trust I shall ever have reason to love you in Christ Jesus. Amen.

"Your very affectionate brother,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER XXXV.

To Mr. Armitage.

"Durham, April 20, 1807.

"My Dear Armitage,—I thank you for the information you gave me in your last, and I praise God for the conduct of Mr. Moore in this business. I hope all will do well, and that you will, by some means, in some place, receive the 'meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light.' This glory is set before us, and I thirst more than ever for all the salvation which can be received in this world. I perceive all our labour, prayer, faith and working, will be seen in that day, as very little that we have done in order to our entrance into glory. I never till lately had such striking views of the heavenly country. The world and the Church are gone, self is gone, when I view the place, the company, the eternity. My soul cries out, 'Oh make, and keep me ready!' The Bible becomes more than ever my delight, and I am ready to say—'I know nothing; I am nothing.' Oh how I sink, yea, lie before the Lord! Every thing that I say or do, preaching, praying, &c, &c, seems to me to be nothing, compared to what it should be. Here I am, here I live, wondering that even the Lord himself should notice me for one moment.

"I hope you make progress in the heavenly road. God is with you, has shown you many things, helped you in many, been kind to you respecting your dear partner, in continuing her with you a little longer. Oh how you should love and serve the Lord your God! You know, nothing can be received but in the same way; you began well, you continued, you are in his favour. Now, my dear John, bear his likeness, O bear the image of your Lord! Be pure in heart; never proud, never angry, never peevish, never fretful. Let all within be from heaven, God your all. I trust you will never rest without this. I hope in your next you will say, 'I gave my all to him. I pleaded that I would

not let him go. He has cleansed my soul. I feel it. All evil is gone. I live in love,—all love, nothing but love.' Time is short, your work is great; God can do it, and he will do it for you. Fear not. Be holy: have the closest union with your Maker, your Saviour.

"Things are doing well here, numbers are turning to the Lord. One of our preachers is sick. I wish Mr. Moore could send me a good preacher from your circuit for three months. But I suppose none of them could leave their business. Could he spare brother Charles Turkington? Or could Charles come to see me, and help me a little, and then return home? How is he situated? Write to me immediately, if there be any prospect in your circuit in a proper way.

"My wife and John unite with me in much love to you all. Pray, pray, much more.

"I am your affectionate brother in Christ Jesus,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XXXVI.

To Mr. Sigston.

"Sunderland, December 2, 1807.

"MY BROTHER SIGSTON,—I sit down to write to you what is upon my mind respecting myself, the church, the nation, and the world.

"My warfare is continual; I am surrounded with the powers of darkness. The temptations to sloth, to fainting, against preaching, praying, &c, &c, are as great as ever; and I sometimes think, are much increased. Invitations to feast, to eat and drink, are more numerous in this place than I have ever known them. A great many of the friends in superior situations, and naturally friendly, have a tendency to produce these effects. I stand in the Lord—I dwell in him. I am kept by the power of God. Of this I am fully assured. I grow, I am less. I become more ashamed and more dependent upon my heavenly Father. My fellowship with God is closer, more constant, and with stronger affection. I am the most grieved with my preaching.

It is so far short of the subject,—redemption, full salvation. I *tremble* as much as ever; and the modesty put upon my soul, makes me tremble in the presence of the people. I am using every means by prayer, &c, to be fit to live among angels. O how pure, how holy, must they be in heaven! Lord Jesus, make me to do thy will as those pure spirits do it above!

"From all the proper information I can receive, the Church in England, and the Methodists in particular, are not decreasing in number, and perhaps not much increasing. But I am certain the doctrine of ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION is upon the decline; and if not enforced will produce a declension in the work amongst the people. I do not see how this is to be restored amongst us; because the greater part of the persons in authority, arising from riches, &c, are much averse to this in their minds. And as the number of such authorities increases, the doctrine will decrease,—and this from a fear of displeasing such authorities. Here the glory is departing, and, I fear, will depart. We have to pray that the number of those may be increased who boldly, as at the first, declare the whole counsel of God. If the Methodists had not had amongst them what no other people have had, then they had not had sin, but now we have no cloak for the neglect. After all this, we must conclude, that the most of the power of God is yet among them.

"A black cloud is over Sunderland and all the seaports, yea, over England itself. Things are fast hastening to a crisis: what that will be, is not revealed. God only knows how far the judgment may reach. The revelations are now most clearly explained by matter of fact; and must not those things which are yet to come, be accomplished?—Things can never continue long as they now are. How is it that there is such a clamour for continued war?—Darkness remains upon us. I wonder at the patience of God! I wonder at the blindness of men!

"I hope if you do not come over this Christmas, you will write me all your mind on these subjects; and in

the mean time, pray, O pray; and pray for us. We are all in peace, but want much prosperity. The Lord bless you and dear Mrs. Sigston, and all the dear friends in Leeds!

"I am yours, very affectionately,
"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XXXVII.

To Mr. Sigston.

"Sunderland, April 23, 1807.

"MY DEAR SIGSTON,—When I received your last I was unable to answer it, and am not yet prepared. A world of confusion! the whole earth trembles. We are all in the dark, and yet the light of God shines upon this little spot, to the astonishment of thousands. I wonder at our continued salvation. Our God yet fighteth for us; and how can we account for it? The Spirit is received in some places, even in its depth; but this is through means. If the ministry is not sound, there is I perceive great power with God among that people. The preachers sometimes take the praise, and this may create a new establishment; but 'God will reward every man according to his works.' The mixture in a general way, I am confident, is increasing. The rich, the mighty sit upon their seats, and too frequently usurp improper authority, which damps too much the living flame amongst the simple. Young preachers seek to gain the respect of such persons, to their own destruction. How to stop the torrent, is beyond the wisdom of man, and (I am afraid, in the *ordinary way* of working,) the power of God. Will any thing less do it than judgment, the fire, the sword, the plague, the army, &c, &c? Will any thing less do it than the test,—'Live to God, and die for it?'

"The stir with the Ottoman makes me conjecture that the time is drawing near. But this is with a few; and, my Lord, what can we do? I am confident we can do nothing, only, 'fear God, and honour the king,' love all the world, and do a little in the way he hath

appointed us, 'stand still and see the salvation of God.' I have lately seen what I never saw before, that is, the great darkness and wickedness which are on all the continent. I am persuaded that the greatest part of the world is now in such a state of superstition, as has never been known: all sects gone, quite gone, from the glory! And, excepting England and some other nations, the world called 'Christian' is *devilish*. I want much to hear from *Pontavice*, who has now a Protestant Church in France; but I cannot write or receive a letter from him. What do you think? Will America cast us off? Shall we stand alone among the nations? What are your views?

"I have lately seen much into the gospel. I am convinced, our glory is little comparatively; especially as it respects the body. We are 'the temples of the Holy Ghost.' I see the necessity of the greatest purity in the outward man. To keep the whole, requires constant prayer, watching, looking always at Christ. I mean that the soul never be diverted from him for one moment: but that I view him in all my acts, take hold of him as the instrument by which I do all my work, and feel that nothing is done without him.—To seek men, world, self, praise, is so shocking to my view at present, that I wonder that we are not all struck dead when the least of this comes upon us!* I know imme-

* On this awful subject the following extract from the Imperial Magazine, for December, 1819, may be of service to every minister of the gospel. It is the substance of a remarkable dream related by the late Rev. R. Bowden, of Darwen, who committed it to writing from the lips of the person to whom the dream happened, on the evening of May 30th, 1813.

THE DREAM.

A gospel minister of evangelical principles, whose name, from the circumstances that occurred, it will be necessary to conceal, being much fatigued, at the conclusion of the afternoon service, retired to his apartment in order to take a little rest. He had not long reclined upon his couch, before he fell asleep and began to dream. He dreamed, that on walking into his garden, he entered a bower that had been erected in it, where he sat down to read and meditate. While thus employed, he thought he heard some person enter the garden; and leaving his bower,

diately when I grieve the Lord,—the Spirit speaks within; and to do wrong in the great light is the great offence. I long to live as near as ever any did; and yet I feel I have not all that Ann Cutler found. My soul is subject to sloth; and I have work, I assure you, to keep all things going at full speed. But when I do this for one day, I see the ground I have gone over. O how swiftly we may run even in this world. I think I am as strong in body to labour as ever I was; and yet I find my sight fails me fast,—a loud knock at my door! I am settling all my little things as much as possible, and long to see the other world. Go on, my

he immediately hastened towards the spot whence the sound seemed to come, in order to discover who it was that had entered. He had not proceeded far, before he discerned a particular friend of his, a gospel minister of considerable talents, who had rendered himself very popular, by his zealous and unwearied exertions in the cause of Christ. On approaching his friend he was surprised to find that his countenance was covered with a gloom, which it had not been accustomed to wear, and that it strongly indicated a violent agitation of mind, apparently arising from conscious remorse. After the usual salutations had passed, his friend asked the relater the time of the day; to which he replied, "twenty-five minutes after four." On hearing this, the stranger said, "It is only one hour since I died, and now I am damned."—"Damned! for what?" inquired the dreaming minister. "It is not," said he "because I have not preached the gospel, neither is it because I have not been rendered useful, for I have now many seals to my ministry, who can bear testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, which they have received from my lips; but it is because I have been accumulating to myself the applause of men more than the honour which cometh from above: and verily I have my reward!" Having uttered these expressions, he hastily disappeared, and was seen no more.

The minister awaking shortly afterwards with the contents of this dream deeply engraven on his memory, proceeded, overwhelmed with serious reflections, towards his chapel, in order to conduct the evening service. On his way thither he was accosted by a friend, who inquired whether he had heard of the severe loss the church had sustained in the death of that able minister ———. He replied, "No:" but being much affected at this singular intelligence, he inquired of him the day and the time of the day when his departure took place. To this his friend replied, "this afternoon, at twenty-five minutes after three o'clock."

dear Sigston, go on! Let all within you praise the Lord; yea, may your whole soul be given up to him! And my dear Mrs. Sigston, live in all the glory of this dispensation! The Lord give you his great blessing, and may all that has ever befallen us, be found the necessary means of brightening our everlasting crown! If you will write and say all your mind on these subjects, with any information respecting the world, the church, yourself and family, you will continue our blessed union in the Lord our Saviour.

"In all commentators, I am at a loss for the depth of the Spirit. Can you say what man has gone fully into it? I think you recommended 'Poole's Synopsis.'

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XXXVIII.

To Mr. A. E. Farrar.

"Investone, Dec. 7th, 1807.

"MY DEAR ABRAHAM,—I thank you for your letter, am glad that you are comfortable in your station. God is with you, and he will be with you, if you walk by the same rule, and mind the same things. You have received from the Lord how you ought to preach and walk before the people. To improve all your time, you will find it necessary, after you have done your work, to retire to sleep, as soon as possible, and to rise early. Where you cannot have your fire made, have your tinder box, wrap yourself well up, and you will find abundance of all things needful in the morning. Keep all the fire within. 'It is the unction,' said Mr. Fletcher, 'that makes the preacher.' Live in purity of heart. Be saved from all sin, and declare this at every proper season. Never be too long, even in the best company. You will easily find out the time to leave: in this you will retain your proper dignity and variety. Never speak evil of one place or society in

the circuit when at another, or of any person to another. In observing this, you will prevent much evil to yourself and your labours. When you preach do not begin too high; you may speak with as much force, and with a better cadence in the lower tone. Your voice will increase in strength, if you keep from the rack. Abraham, be a man of God, a useful preacher, bringing many souls to glory: study this, and you will accomplish it. Let your end always be 'the salvation of men.'

"You can have a book and write all your sermons before you preach them; but do not write too much, neither determine to be too correct in keeping to your plan. Never be stiff, tiresome, &c: the English cannot bear this. Never be tedious; yet do not be too short. Let them have all from you, but 'much in little.' Never say 'my hearers,' in the pulpit: this would be better from the aged. All your address should be modest and grave, yet sweet and simple. I feel a strong desire that you may ever answer to all I have said of you, that I may never be ashamed of my confident boasting in your behalf.

"Do, oh do take my love, much love to every place, to every society and family in Holderness. The Lord be with them! Oh how I love them. As to the blessed and dear friends, who inquire in Hull and Beverly, &c, I long to see them all;—it may be 'at the resurrection of the just.' I am sometimes afraid lest the work should stop in this circuit: this may be from Satan; for numbers are still saved. Pray for us, and write me all your mind.

"I am your affectionate friend,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

In 1808 Liverpool became the scene of Mr. Bramwell's labours. From the statement in the first chapter of this memoir, it will be seen that some of his relatives resided in that town. He was received by the society there as an eminent minister of Christ, and soon found the blessed fruit of his labours in the gospel. Much

of his state of mind, the success of his ministry, and his ardent desire for the salvation of his relatives and friends, will be learnt by a perusal of the following letters :—

LETTER XXXIX.

To his Daughter.

"Liverpool, Oct. 15th, 1808.

"My Dear Ann,—I received your letter. I think you retain a true regard for God your Saviour, and for your relations in the flesh. Your abiding in the truth gives me great joy. The loss of all things on earth is little, when compared with the loss of one soul. Let nothing hinder your proceeding. Seek the great salvation from all evil. 'The blood of Christ cleanseth from ALL sin;' and you will receive the full liberty, in looking to God and believing his word. Live in the spirit of prayer. Read the word with much thought and care. If you get established in the will of God, you will find constant happiness; it will become your great delight. Never imagine that you have arrived at the summit. No; see God in all things, and you will see no END.

"You may make progress in other things. A knowledge of history is quite proper; and, 'The Universal History' is the book you should have. I know not how to send it you. I feel very desirous that you should practise music, and learn to play well. At the same time be sure to study the French. You must write to me soon, informing me of what you do every day,—what progress you make in every thing,—in salvation, &c. "Your dear father

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER XL.

To Mrs. Hargreaves.

"March 9th, 1809.

"My Dear Sister,—I wish to give you some information respecting your friends in Liverpool. I

found the society in a very low state, and left out one hundred in Liverpool the first quarter. The second quarter I joined one hundred and thirty new members, saw a number saved who had lost their confidence, and several times received in public a shaking amongst the people. The work has very much revived this quarter. At first I could find very few who retained the blessing of entire sanctification. That appeared to have been given up for some years; but a number have lately been brought into the glorious liberty. There is a blessed work through the society in Gerrard-street; six or eight persons have been saved at one meeting. Scarcely a class meets, but some of the members are blessed. On Saturday week, in the penitent meeting at Pitt-street, twelve persons were saved. Three found mercy at a class meeting last night. There are not so many returning from the world at the present, yet the society is made truly alive again. A few, both rich and poor, are awakened. Some precious women in rather high life, are truly saved, with whose names you are unacquainted.

"Ever yours affectionately,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XLI.

To Mr. A. E. Farrar.

"March 24th, 1809.

"MY DEAR ABRAHAM,—I thank you for your last letter: at that time you were in health, labouring with all your might to bring sinners to God. I am lately informed that you cannot continue this great work. I am sorry that your streng this so much decreased; but am very desirous of knowing all the circumstances from yourself. A letter, informing me of your recovery, would be highly satisfactory. However, God, your heavenly Father, knows how and when to deliver. I am certain he loves you, and will deal with you accordingly. He careth for you, and will pour out his blessing. I am confident you will not want any man-

ner of thing that is good.' I believe your soul will rise above it all.

"Now is the time to prove your affection. Now is the time to lay up the weight of glory. If you should preach again, you will have fresh matter. If you should preach no more, you will have your reward. The work of justification is great; yet the entire renewal of the soul in the image of God, is much greater. This full salvation will comfort you. Nothing but patience, saying with your Lord, 'I will drink it.' O the rest in God! I congratulate you. This is your glory, 'Christ my all!' Give up body and soul. Fear not, Abraham. He will be every thing that faith can make him. He will be this to your heart in every state. I could love to see you brave affliction, death, &c, &c. I think I do see you, I hear you saying, 'I am more than conqueror!' Amen! The Lord be with you!

"I am praying ALWAYS; nothing less will do. May I endure, may I increase, may I abound!

"Yours, most sincerely,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XLII.

To Mr. Everett.

"Liverpool, June 21, 1809.

"MY BROTHER EVERETT,—I received yours. I am glad, because you continue strong to labour, and God is with you, sending prosperity. Know your chain, and determine to go to its length. But also determine not to *break* it. 'He knoweth whereof we are made,' and indeed 'we are but dust.' Be filled with the Spirit; and yet the spirit will be subject to reason. Go on, my dear brother. I must decrease, but you will increase. Be a burning light for ever; for, if ever the fire goes out you will be fit for nothing.

"Yours, affectionately,

"WILLIAM BRAMWELL."

LETTER XLIII.

To Mr. Sigston.

"Liverpool, June, 1809.

"My Dear Brother Sigston,—I received yours. Mrs. Pawson left this world with the truth in her mouth. How we shall return to our sanctification, is another matter. I have some doubt concerning it. It must begin with us; and I fear we shall not begin. That it is gone in a great degree from the pulpit, the Magazine, from Christian meetings, is evident. I should love to have a conversation with you on this subject. I never was more concerned. I never preached with so much power. I never wept and entreated so much, and I never saw less general effect in that way. Yet some scores have lately received it: numbers are at the pool side, and we have had much conviction, and some showers of blessings.

"An idea is going forth, that 'when we are justified we are entirely sanctified,' and 'to feel evil nature after justification, is to lose pardon,' &c. You may depend upon it, this is the devil's great gun. We shall have much trouble with this, and I am afraid we cannot suppress it. I have felt a strong desire for you and Mrs. Sigston to come here this summer; but if you are called another way, I submit.

"I remain your affectionate brother,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER XLIV.

To Miss Brew.

"St. Helens, July 5th, 1809.

"My Dear Miss Brew,—I received yours, which was a comfort to me. I rejoice on your account. You are kept by the power of God. It is by *faith* we stand. I believe you have received the forgiveness of sins. It is an unspeakable blessing to have this, and to *know it*.

In this you will not rest; for, in reading the word of God, you will find 'great and precious promises.' They are all yours, for you are Christ's. 'All things are yours.' Shall any thing prevent or hinder you? Can Satan persuade? Has not God performed his word? And will he not give you all things? To hunger, to thirst, to pray, to plead, is your act: and this through Divine power. Will not God undertake your cause and give you full salvation? Fear not. You will find the cleansing blood, you will receive the mind of Christ, and all *through faith*. O for this mighty faith that brings the blessing! When you receive this you will be less than ever. You will feel your nothingness, but your all from God and in God. The sacrifice being complete, the soul will be completely changed into the image of God. You will then 'bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things.' I want you to be devoted to God. You cannot yet know for what end God hath made you so happy: I say so *happy*,—for, 'what hath the world to equal this? You may now answer the end of your creation, of redemption, of the death of Christ, and the descent of the ever blessed Spirit! You may now offer up strong cries and tears for your relations. You may now drop a word for the Son of God. You may prevent the everlasting ruin of some. You may increase the glory of numbers!

"O see your call. It is of great importance. My advice is, that you reject every thing at the present that would in the least degree draw you from the love of God. Keep your centre; never be diverted, never wander, mourn if ever you lose sight of him. Rejoice in a constant view of him. What shall we be in a short time? I am lost in astonishment. I see the glory beyond all thought; 'we shall see Him as he is.' This will consist in our being like Him. This 'recompense of reward' is now known to thousands; and what are all their former sorrows now? What are all their temptations? What is persecution now? O! I am 'lost in wonder, love, and praise.' My dear Miss Brew, never

shrink from the cross, never be ashamed. Proclaim the Lamb of God. Hear him, 'Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.' Is it not enough, quite enough to be with him and to behold his glory? Let us be ready to take our flight, be crucified to the world, to be dead whilst we live. I should be glad to see you soon, if the Lord will, but his will be done! If you are in your place God will be with you, and you will see the cloud, and know when to move. Pray, O pray much. Let your heart be given up in this duty. A light shall shine upon your path. Do not live as most persons do; be not *almost*, but *altogether* a Christian. The Lord bless and direct you in all things! and may I always have to rejoice on your account!

"I am yours affectionately,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XLV.

To Mrs. Hargreaves.

"Liverpool, 1809.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—We are sorry to find from Betty Gott's letter that you are much worse than usual. The mystery will shortly be unveiled, and you will see God. In the mean time it must be the great labour of faith which can support and bear you up in such circumstances; but God is yet able to bring you through. I frequently think that your everlasting crown will shine superior to thousands, who have not so suffered. O that I could in the least relieve you! But what are wishes, or desires, or tears, for one in agony of pain? The Lord Jesus stands before you, and shows himself in blood. Nothing but the viewing of him, can give the least consolation. Salvation is near; though it tarry, wait for it. It will come, it will not tarry. God hears your groanings, and will come down and deliver you.

"On Sunday evening, (a beautiful sight!) I met about thirty of the Sunday scholars, who have a blessed

work upon their minds. Twelve young men have found peace. A great work among them. I hope they will be kept. The Lord be with them!

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XLVI.

To Mr. Preston.

"Liverpool, 1809.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—In writing to you I find it on my mind to declare the great love of God our Saviour. Nothing produces such union of souls, such pity for sinners, such warmth of affection towards the church. The love of Christ is my study; but I am frequently at a loss to understand how it is that my love to him is so little. I am sometimes ready to stumble at myself on this account. 'Am I right? Can I be right in this little love? Could I die for thee? Could I suffer long, and still love with a passion like thine? I cry to God daily, hourly, constantly, to receive a thousand times more love. I must give myself away; for the sacrifice was consumed. I too must be consumed, self must be consumed, all the man must be consumed. And yet I must live.' Thus to lose myself in him, I find is my glory. Then nothing but Christ, in thought, word, preaching, and praying, &c, &c. All the Son of God! His mind, his way, his work, his manner! To this I am coming, I am near. I am just going into my Lord. Here the noise of self, of the world, and of the devil, is over. All is burning, all is rest, yet all is calm within. The eye fixed, the soul established, the tongue loosed, and all in the Spirit! Here the Lord teaches, the Lord governs, and the Lord continually supplies.

"This is salvation, and the salvation belonging to all believers. This is the glorious liberty of the children of God. This is for you; and I pray that you may never rest satisfied without it. Amen! The reason why the Methodists in general do not live in this salvation, there is too much sleep, too much meat and

drink, too little fasting and self denial, too much conversation with the world, too much preaching and hearing, and too little self examination and prayer. A number of Methodists now will be in public the whole of the sabbath; and if they heard angels all the time they would be backsliders. It is astonishing how the devil is cheating us, and at the same time filling for a moment our heads, and emptying our hearts. Good God! what shall we do? How shall we return? Is it possible to bring the body back by the same way or into the same way? I fear not. I sometimes nearly lose my hope. In all churches till the present time, Satan has used outward splendour to darken the inward glory. Is it too late to see, to know, to understand the temptations of the devil?

"My dear Preston, consider these things. Stand and look around. Do not condemn, but pity. Do not destroy, but heal. Do not drive, but draw. If possible, live in all the union, the power, the salvation. Watch, keep your body under, mortify, slay, crucify! Be a man of God, never go to bed late, always rise at four if possible, not lying in bed above six hours. Give a good account; stand before the Son of man. O the glory of bringing all things to the judgment seat! This would cure us of sloth and every thing else. Determine. Let me hear from you, and of you; yea, let me hear that you live with God, walk with God. Keep from every thing wild, every thing that goes before the Spirit. Take God with you, but never hang behind. Keep up and abound, 'increase with the increase of God.'

"I have had some blessed showers lately; numbers saved in the meetings; distress amongst many in the extreme, I mean in temporal things. What will the end be? The powers of heaven are shaken. The inquisition, feudal system, nunneries, devil, coming down! Glory! Glory! Christ will come! He will reign triumphant. We may see it when we are in heaven, if not before.

"O pray for me! God bless you. My love to dear

Mrs. Preston. My wife, after being a month in the fever, is recovering.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER XLVII.

To his Daughter.

"Liverpool, May 2, 1810.

"My Dear Ann,—I now find you much on my mind; and I have a desire to see you. In this I must endeavour to feel the most perfect resignation. In this world we must suffer; and the absence which is necessary for our well being on earth, is certainly one part of this suffering. You have one that loves you with that regard which is far beyond all my affection; and he will ever watch over you for your salvation. Evil spirits, an evil world, with all around you, will not be able to ensnare so long as you live in fellowship with your God. Let all things be done with a pure design for his glory. Keep your soul in that sweet calm in him. Watch to please your Lord in all things. Be Mary, have Mary's heart, receive of Christ's teaching, and increase in all those heavenly tempers every day. I long to see you eminent for holiness, for the divine life, receiving the image of your God, and speaking for your heavenly Master in every action. I am persuaded a work is before you; and, if all diligence is given, if every mean is used, if faith is in constant exercise, if hope prevails, if your soul is fixed on heaven, you will be ready for all the will of God. 'One thing is needful,' which is continual prayer. All will fail unless you labour in this way. Let the times be as frequent as possible, and the manner as fervent as possible. Full of expectation, look for the promise, and believe for the blessing. Be mighty in this duty. You will be strongly tempted to neglect prayer. Satan can continue his authority with all persons who do not give themselves to prayer.

'Arm'd with all thy might, I cry to thee;
In *this* I shall receive the victory.'

Fear not, Ann! Your Lord hath bought all the glory; and I hope you will claim your part in the first resurrection. O that you may ever be an ornament to the gospel of God! I am your affectionate father,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

"P. S. Can you read a chapter in Hebrew, yet not forgetting your French?"

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Bramwell's appointment a second time to Sheffield—His conduct and ministerial success—Remarkable anecdote—Letters—His second appointment to Birstal—His usefulness in that circuit—Letters.

ONE of Mr. Bramwell's particular friends gives the following account of his second appointment to the Sheffield circuit:

"In the year 1810, after an absence of twelve years, by the very earnest request of the people, the conference sent Mr. Bramwell a second time to Sheffield. Many of his old friends and fellow helpers, in the former revival, had put off their harness, and were taken to their eternal reward. One of his intimate surviving friends told him, that 'he was come to perform the last office of friendship, to commit his mortal remains to the grave, and to improve the circumstances of his life and death to the living.'*

"When Mr. B. resided first in Sheffield he was a junior preacher, although his colleagues laboured with him in the bond of Christian fellowship: but now he was appointed as the superintendent, and in that office we will first consider him.

"In the commencement of his work he openly avowed that he 'was determined to know nothing among us but Christ, and him crucified.' 'None,' he said, 'would be permitted to inform him privately of dissensions

* We refer to the late Mr. Longden; the event accorded with this presentiment. The sermon which Mr. Bramwell preached on the occasion, was published in the large edition of the Memoirs of Mr. L.

among brethren, but that he would always have the accuser and the accused face to face, and that he would neither condemn a man, nor form an opinion upon any case, before the individual whom it concerned had answered for himself.'

"Where a superintendent has to preside in a large circuit, he will often have to exercise all his wisdom, firmness, and forbearance. In the present imperfect state of our knowledge, and the shallowness of the human comprehension, there will be a difference of opinion: and even good men, desiring to promote what they believe will be for the glory of God, and the good of his church, are in danger of being carried too far by inordinate warmth of feeling and expression. On such occasions, with what mild authority, as an angel of the church among us, have we seen Mr. Bramwell quell the rising of evil, and reconcile what appeared contradictory to those of more limited views! He was able to manage the whole vessel with apparent ease. In preachers' and leaders' meetings, &c, he would kindly interrupt any circumlocution; while he gave to all a patient hearing, he facilitated the business; and, in conclusion, recapitulating the whole, he showed the strength or weakness of the different arguments, and left the decision to the majority of the meeting.

"One great object, which he always kept before him, was economy in the public expenditure. He would submit to any privation, rather than see the stewards burdened with a weight of debt; nor would he permit an increase of expenses, without the probability of obtaining a supply of sufficient funds. Our stewards were in advance when he came into the circuit: under his direction the debt was liquidated, and he left our finances in prosperity. The same principles were extended to the building of chapels. Before a chapel was erected, he first considered the magnitude of the population in that vicinity, the present state of the work, the existing inconvenience of the worshippers, the efforts of the people to raise a sufficient subscription among themselves, and the probable help they would

want from others. If all these concurred, it then appeared that the Lord designed a house to be built for himself, in which his great name might be recorded.

"When our societies, under Mr. Bramwell's superintendence, saw that he would not permit improper appeals of private or public charity to be made, they liberally supported those plans which he patronized, rallied around him with Christian philanthropy, and tasted the blessedness of doing and receiving good. This transforming, uniting principle, amalgamated all into one effort and enjoyment.

"We beheld him as a minister, and an exemplary man of God, matured by increase of days,—shorn, it is true, of some of his masculine vigour; yet he continued to hold a meeting for prayer, every morning at five, where many souls were quickened and saved. He had, if possible, greater importunity and power in prayer, with a richer variety of expression. As an instrument of the salvation of thousands of immortal spirits, he had become venerable. The peculiar answers of his prayers for individuals in afflictive circumstances, can only be revealed when the secrets of the heart will be brought into judgment. The dissensions which he found among us, vanished as we profited by his ministry, and drunk into his spirit. The selfish contraction of the heart, was expanded by his benign influence, and we became as members of one family, sitting under the same vine and fig tree, none daring to interrupt our sacred peace and growing prosperity.

"He unceasingly pressed upon his hearers the necessity of Christian holiness, and so preached this doctrine as to manifest he was himself habitually grounded and settled in the experience of it. He raised the standard of Christian experience as high as the Scriptures do, and yet placed it within the reach of every justified person. He gave believers no rest till they sought with all the heart to be fully saved from sin, knowing that we are in danger of counting our steps back again, if we do not 'press towards the mark for the prize of our high calling.' 'The reason,' he said, 'why many

seek to be saved from the remains of the carnal mind, and do not obtain the blessing, is, because they have secretly backslidden, and have forfeited the Divine favour. If they were correctly acquainted with their own state, they would first seek to be justified by faith in Christ Jesus.'

"He faithfully admonished his hearers, that, conformity to the world, and inordinate love of riches, open avenues to a thousand snares, and are the great bane of Christian simplicity and holiness; that this is not a state of rest, but of labour; not of indulgence, but of self denial; and that these are sure marks of discipleship, if they spring from faith which worketh by love. His conversation was in heaven, from whence he looked continually for the Saviour. He often expressed his wonder respecting the joys and the employments of the saints in light. He frequently said respecting them, in familiar conversation, 'What are they doing, think you? How I long to be with them! To quit the burden of mortality, and, glorious as the sun, quick as thought, pass from world to world, and sphere to sphere.' No sudden alarm, no picturesque scenery, no political news, no worldly conversation, interrupted one moment his union. He breathed, and lived, in Christ, in God.

"Under the gift of such a ministry, our congregations waited for the word of life, and the brethren were 'striving together, till we should all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto perfect men, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we should henceforth be no more children, but speaking the truth in love, might grow up into HIM in all things which is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.'"

While Mr. Bramwell was in this circuit, the following occurrence took place, which is related by the person that was the subject of it, Mr. Thomas Riley, one of the many serious among our soldiery, and who is at

present sergeant-major in the 7th dragoon guards. It is an additional confirmation of his power with Israel's God.

"In the month of July, 1811, I was quartered in Sheffield; at which time our regiment was ordered for Spain, then the seat of a protracted and sanguinary war. My mind was painfully exercised with the thoughts of leaving my dear wife and four helpless children in a strange country, unprotected and unprovided for. Mr. Bramwell felt a very lively interest in our situation; and his sympathizing spirit seemed to drink into all the agonizing feelings of my tender wife upon the occasion. He supplicated the throne of grace day and night, in our behalf. My wife and I spent the evening, previous to our march, at a friend's house in company with Mr. Bramwell, who sat in a very pensive mood, and appeared to be engaged in a spiritual struggle all the time, until shortly after supper he suddenly pulled his hand out of his bosom, laid it on my knee, looked me in the face, and said, 'Brother Riley, mark what I am about to say; you are not to go to Spain. Remember, I tell you, you are not: for I have been wrestling with God on your behalf, and when my heavenly Father condescends in mercy to bless me with power to lay hold on himself, I do not easily let him go; no, not until I am favoured with an answer. Therefore, you may depend upon it, that the next time I hear from you, you will be settled in quarters.' This came to pass exactly as he said; for on our march the next day I was informed that the regiment was countermanded; and when we got to our quarters, at Chichester in Sussex, I wrote to him with a grateful heart, informing him that his prediction had received its accomplishment, as our regiment was not to go to Spain.

"The above is a simple statement of a fact which could still be attested by more than one witness, and is an additional proof of the active faith which he exercised in the promises of Jesus, who hath said, 'All things are possible unto him that believeth.'"

Several of Mr. Bramwell's letters from this place,

show his heavenly conversation, and his earnest desire to join the spirits of just men made perfect.

LETTER XLVIII.

To his Daughter.

"Sheffield, 1811.

"My Dear Ann,—I purposed seeing you this week, when I went into the circuit, but have been prevented, as I had nearly lost my voice, but am now much better. I think it would not be well for you to go to M—— at this time; unless you have got strong faith, and very often retire from company to pray. I know it will be injurious to your soul, and to your improvement in all you have received. Your being an eminent Christian, lies near my heart. You are almost continually on my mind. I want you to be in the closest union with your Lord, always to sit at his feet. Strive to get quite above a light spirit. You know that the Spirit of the Lord is a happy Spirit; but it is a quiet, serious Spirit. If you leave the family several times in the forenoon, also in the afternoon, you will accomplish all I want. I have some hope that Mr. Longden will recover; but, you say, it is not the general opinion. Well! he is happy in God. It matters not when we remove, if we be ready; and for this I am striving more than ever. Nothing can satisfy, but the being admitted among the first orders in glory. I have had striking views of that blessed state,—it is all my desire. I long to be with them. We shall be together for ever.

"O pray! pray! This is your season,—a glorious harvest! Put in your sickle and reap much—much is promised. Live, oh live! Be a woman of God. Be a *striver:* learn that blessed track; it is only such who enter in. Make this your daily work; and 'work it out with fear and trembling.' Dear Ann, do all God's will. I hope you are growing in grace. I pray that you may. To receive the pardon of your sins, is a great blessing, but too many rest in sins forgiven. I

want to receive all the salvation from sin, to live in constant union with God, to be all love; and this you will receive in prayer. Plead with God; again I say, 'strive to enter in;' all the mercy of God will be given. Learn all you can in every way. Study Christ Jesus.

"Your affectionate father,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER XLIX.

To his Daughter.

"Sheffield, March, 1811.

"MY DEAR ANN,—You are now entered upon another station in life. I suppose that you imagined your former state called you to make some appearance, which was connected with your standing. In this I have always thought you were mistaken. However, on your leaving the school, even in your own idea, there is no farther plea. I, therefore, as your most affectionate father, wish you by every means to consider how you may in the greatest degree ornament your profession. You are the daughter of a Methodist preacher; you see my station. You are a child of God, a follower of your Saviour. You will be noticed by all; all will watch, and you should expect it.

"In the first place, let all your manners be open, free, kind to all; yet modest, serious, without the least gloom. Let your clothes be quite plain,—bonnet, gown, shoes, every thing you have. But let them be always clean and good. Though dress is not religion, yet plainness is becoming. A well dressed Quaker appears to me to be near a pattern. I wish you to be such, and not to hesitate for one moment; but, without saying a word to any one, determine in God to do so. I believe you will, and I shall rejoice. The greater the cross, the greater the glory.

"Again I wish you to improve your mind in proper books, to study the Scriptures in Hebrew, to read some part of the French Testament every day, and never to

be much in company, except when you read to others, or are at some proper work. Study geography, and read biography. Let your times be fixed for private prayer,—say twice in the forenoon, and twice in the afternoon. Always see your next blessing, by reading the word; and gain some ground every day. At certain times visit the sick, and pray with them. Break through in this, and you will find great consolation: you will feel for them. I pray for you every day, that you may possess these virtues, and be all I desire. May your heavenly Father give you every blessing! I shall expect you to see us, as I have written; and we shall have great joy of you in Christ Jesus.

"Your dear father,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER L.

To his Son.

"Sheffield, May 13, 1811.

"My Dear John,—Your last letter has greatly endeared you to me; for I must love you still more from the slightest confidence that you will love God. I esteem the things of time as nothing, when compared with everlasting glory; and wonder at man, (poor man!) who is but the creature of a moment, and yet so bent on ruin! so difficult to be persuaded! so hard to be moved to seek for salvation! Happy! truly happy are they who live to HIM who died for them! This disturbs no study, no learning, no proper labour: on the contrary, it fits and prepares the mind for every thing in life or in death. I am most truly waiting for my change. The anticipation of that glory which is to be revealed, ravishes my soul: and from the persuasion that I shall have you with me, I am eaten up with joy. I think I perceive how you are prevented: you expect the end without the means.

"When I saw my need of Christ, I believed (as you do) that I must be saved, and that none but God could

save me. But I found I possessed a degree of power to ask and to pray; and I exercised that power, praying for salvation repeatedly during the day. Though I sometimes felt but little, yet I continued to beg according to the Scriptures, 'Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find.' The Lord drew my mind to converse with his people, to ask them to pray for, and to reprove me, to correct and to search me. This I found to be of great service, and I still see that this is the way of God with man. Use all the means of grace, for they can do no harm, but, under God, will produce the effect. Feel for the church; and you will soon be drawn to act in some little way for the glory of HIM who gave himself for you. If man be alive to temporal things, how much more should he be alive to the work of his salvation! and 'to strive' is the commandment. "Your dear father,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LI.

To his Daughter.

"Sheffield, March 4, 1812.

"MY DEAR ANN,—'All things are of God;' and it is the duty of a creature to sink into his will. A Christian, a friend, a man of God, has left us. Thousands attended his funeral. I never saw such a crowd on any similar occasion. Such solemnity remains upon us, as lays us in the dust. I often say, 'Let me die with him.' Soon, yea, very soon, we shall meet again. The family are much, but very properly, affected. It will, I trust, produce much greater salvation. I feel as if I could do nothing but pray: in this I am saved, and shall ever be saved through my God. What is earth? All nothing, when compared with HIM! One proper view of glory eclipses the whole.

"Live, my dear Ann, *live!* May your life be devotion! may it be entire *salvation!* I thank you for your being so particular in your news; this is what I like;

only just say in every letter your state of mind, which is to me ALL. "Your affectionate father,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LII.

To Mr. Sigston.

"Sheffield, March, 1812.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—The changes in this world greatly affect me. I am more than ever astonished at the forbearance of God. I have seen numbers lately who have never submitted until the hand of God was upon them: but in their extremity they have called upon him, and he has saved them. Surely in the next world, the different degrees of glory will be beyond all we can now conceive. I am so fully convinced of this, that I am striving every day to secure as far as possible, the first degree of glory. O how my soul is moved to labour for this! Mr. Longden's death has been of much good to many, and I believe the fruit will be found after many days. He made a blessed end. "Yours affectionately,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LIII.

To his Daughter.

"Sheffield, June 3, 1812.

"MY DEAR ANN,—I hope the family and yourself continue in all proper exercise for the benefit of body and mind, because time appears to me exceedingly short. Our removals excite in me some keen feelings for children, relations, and particular friends. It matters not in what place upon this earth we stand. The Lord is always in every place, waiting to comfort his people, and to make his disciples holy and happy in himself. He *wills*, that we should as soon as possible learn that lesson,—to live independent, to dwell in God, and God in us; and this union to complete our joy in this world and to raise us to glory everlasting.

The company of angels, in our state of probation, would not alone be sufficient; much less the company of the nearest friends, without having Christ Jesus as our constant companion. To resolve upon private as well as public devotion, must be the conduct of God's children; and by close examination of the influence of the Spirit, you will soon find the possibility of coming to understand, in all friendly intercourse, when the call is to private meditation and prayer. You know, my dear Ann, what I want concerning this,—that you should answer the end of creation, redemption, the call of the Spirit and the means of grace; and this by a life of devotion, giving up yourself to a striving, to an agony, to that labour in Christ Jesus which will produce the image of God, the perfect love, the perfect separation from all things which are not in the life of union with your Redeemer.

"To be singular, will be at the first your fear; but look at your Lord, read his practice frequently in the New Testament, and consider how singular he was, and without the least fear of a frowning world. What is my duty? this is the point, without the least regard to consequences. For this reason, retire from every company, however friendly, a number of times in the day. Mind not what looks or words you receive; stay in no place where you cannot do this. Go to no parties, without first knowing the persons, and what is likely to take place. Claim your liberty, by never consenting contrary to sound judgment. Let nothing hinder the full salvation. Read what I have been preaching from, several times lately, Phil. iii, 10, 11, 12. Look well into it, and make every purpose or promise your own. You are never in greater danger than when there is the form without the power; 'from such turn away.'

"Make great improvement in the divine life at the bridge. Every thing in the house I hope will forward the work of your salvation. You will, most likely, have shortly to enter into public life. Take care to lay up a stock, and let nothing be wasted. Give a good ac-

count to me and to God. We shall have to stand together in judgment. I shall be closely examined as to my conduct towards you, and you on the ground of receiving instruction. It is a day at which I often look. O the change of views by all the world! The torment, the glory! Stand by me here, and stand with me then and for ever. Have all things ready; receive every purchased blessing. 'Pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.' The Lord write the above upon your heart and bless you in all things. Live, O live, till I meet you above! 'I am ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand.' Pray for your father; pray for the church; pray for the world. Plead, O plead with God, and say, 'I will not let thee go.'

"I am your affectionate father,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

At the conference held in Leeds, in 1812, the friends in the Nottingham and Birstal circuits wished to enjoy the labours of Mr. Bramwell, and as both parties were very urgent, it was determined to take the sense of conference on the subject, when a majority decided in favour of Birstal.

The societies, both in the town and in the circuit, were at that time in a very low state. On the first Sunday that he preached in Birstal, he met the society, and observed, that "slow singing, long prayers, long meetings, and late attendance on the ordinances, were indubitable marks of a low state of grace." He recommended them to be in their meetings precisely at the time appointed, to be brief in singing and prayer, and in general to close the meetings at the expiration of one hour. He also observed that he would neither speak evil, nor hear it, concerning any one; and if any person attempted to act in such a disingenuous manner, he would instantly stop him, and expose his conduct to the persons concerned. He told them, that it was his regular plan to remain all night in the different places of the circuit to which he went to preach, and hoped

the friends would accommodate him with a bed; if it was a poor one he could sleep upon it, as he wished to see the members in the circuit. But knowing the inefficacy of the best concerted schemes without the Divine blessing, he added, that all this would not avail without constant, fervent prayer; and many will long remember the arguments which he then used to prevail upon the people to unite with him in this important work. He said with an energy and feeling peculiar to himself, "I know a man that on the bended knees of his body prays for Birstal thirteen times a day, sometimes for hours together!"

His next step was to regulate the band meetings. According to rule, he would admit none who did not enjoy justification by faith; and to those who professed this and applied, he gave band tickets, recommending at the same time to every member of the public band to meet in private band, and to seek the blessing of entire sanctification. The leaders in Birstal had been met once every fortnight, but he determined to meet them once a week, and kept a list of their names. In every part of the circuit, after preaching on the week nights, he examined the class papers, and inquired after the absentees. There was a special examination of the leaders once a year, when he asked the following questions:

First.—Are you in debt?

Second.—Do you enjoy a clear sense of your acceptance with God?

Third.—And are you wholly sanctified?

Fourth.—Are you punctual to the time of beginning, whether the members are present or not?

Fifth.—Do you conclude in an hour?

Sixth.—Do you attend to family prayer, morning and evening?

When he came, several of the leaders met two classes; where this was the case he appointed proper persons to take one of them, observing that no leader could properly watch over more than one class. When the Spirit of the Lord was poured out, (which was the

case soon after his arrival,) and the classes increased in number, he divided them and appointed other leaders, observing that twenty souls were as many as any one person could attend to. He had a quantity of class papers printed, with the following rules at the bottom.

First.—That every leader meet his own class, except in case of urgent necessity.

Second.—That he be punctual to the time of his meeting.

Third.—To sing not more than two verses at the beginning.

Fourth.—To be brief in prayer, and particularly to confine his petitions for those present.

Fifth.—That several persons be asked to pray at the conclusion.

Sixth.—That the meeting conclude in an hour.

Seventh.—That the absentees be noted down, and visited by the leader in the course of the week.

Eighth.—That the leader be zealous in speaking to persons who come under the word.

Ninth.—That every leader labour to enjoy the blessing of entire sanctification, as a good qualification for his office.

If any of the classes were in a low state, he privately spoke to some of the most lively leaders to visit them.

This man of God, having thus taken every necessary step, and having engaged his colleagues, the leaders, and the members, together with himself, in earnest prayer to God for a revival, the Spirit of the Lord was soon poured out, especially at Birstal and Gomersall. Many were brought out of darkness into marvellous light; so that at the Christmas day love feast, 1812, he gave notice that on the following day the new members should be publicly admitted at the chapel in Birstal; when a most pleasing sight was presented to the congregation,—about fifty converts, chiefly young persons, sat round the front of the gallery, to whom he read the rules of the society, asked them questions respecting the time and the manner of their conviction or conversion to God, and, after having put the motion

respecting their subscribing to the rules, he gave to each of them a copy with suitable advice, and concluded the service with solemn prayer.

In one of the local preachers' meetings, he asked every preacher his Christian experience, when he advised every man to speak and hear evil of no one: this counsel they all promised to follow. At the Easter Sunday love feast, 1813, the Spirit of the Lord was abundantly poured out, and many felt his saving power. Six or seven stood up successively to speak. Some declared they had received the pardon of sin; others, entire sanctification; and many more were afterwards found who had received the same blessing.

Towards the close of his second year, he had a severe attack of the rheumatic fever. His illness commenced on the Saturday. Being unwilling to omit his appointment on the Sunday, though he could neither mount his horse nor dismount without assistance, he went and preached at Cleckheaton. Not being able to ride home, he went to Mr. Pearson's of Gomersall, and remained there eight or nine days. His pain was very severe, but he bore it as a man of God, and was never heard to complain. He frequently said, "Glory be to God! This is better than hell fire!" He constantly and fervently prayed with the family three times a day; and when he was so ill that he could not bear to be out of bed, he still continued his delightful exercise of prayer.

One evening when he was very sick, he fell out of his chair upon the floor. There happened to be only one person in the room attending on him, who immediately attempted to lift him up, but, not being able, exclaimed, "Oh Mr. Bramwell, what must I do?" As soon as he was able, he replied, "PRAY! That always brings me out on the right side." Prayer was accordingly made, in which he fervently joined. Having at length been raised with difficulty upon the bed, he pleasantly observed, "Continue to pray; we shall never sink while engaged in that exercise."

During this affliction, the friends were engaged in

almost incessant supplication for his recovery. Two of the preachers were going to see him one afternoon during his indisposition, and hearing some persons engaged in prayer in a house near the road, they asked a by-stander if there was a prayer meeting at that place, who replied, "Mr. Bramwell, our good preacher, is ill, and they are praying for his recovery."

As long as he remained in this circuit, his conduct was truly exemplary. He used every possible exertion to promote the welfare of the church and of the world. The Lord was pleased to crown his labours with abundant success; for at the expiration of the second year, it appeared that about five hundred had been added to the society.

We subjoin only two letters written from Birstal, which show the sweetness of his communion with God, and his zeal for the Divine glory.

LETTER LIV.

To his Son.

"Birstal, August 20, 1812.

"My Dear John,—I am more than ever persuaded of the necessity of being at all times ready for that 'eternal weight of glory.' I have lately had a most blessed view of the 'world to come.' All things are dross when compared with Christ, and the glory of his kingdom. I hunger! I thirst! I pray; and with all my heart dedicate my soul to God.

"The world is in a strange state, as it appears to many. I see the Almighty going forth in his judgments; and there will be an end, but not yet. I do not expect to see it in my days. In this I may be mistaken; but there are many huge mountains to be removed, and none but God can accomplish the work. This he will do in his own way; and who can say to him, 'What doest thou?' The world to come is everlasting. I think much of its immutability. As soon as I leave the body, my state will be fixed for evermore.

And yet wonder, O heavens! that man should be worse than the ox or ass! He does not *consider!*

"I am your affectionate father,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

The following letter was addressed to a friend who had lost his second wife. It breathes Mr. Bramwell's usual spirit of commiseration, and evinces the great watchfulness which he exercised over himself.

LETTER LV.

To Mr. Thomas Jerram.

"August, 1813.

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I wonder at the ways of God! Yet, I am certain, he can do nothing but in infinite wisdom. Yet he is past finding out. The Lord provided you with a helpmate; he gave her for a season, and then took her to himself. He most assuredly provided you another; but only suffered her to remain for a season. They are now before the throne, (O happy souls!) where sorrows are all ended. We are left to mourn and share in the world of sorrow a little while, and he will come for us. We shall soon share 'the eternal weight of glory.' How necessary to be ready!

"I was this morning making the inquiry, 'Am I ready? Am I ready to leave the world this moment? Am I ready as an individual, as a preacher, as a husband, as a parent? Do I do all I can every day, in all respects? O my soul! how is it? I may live much nearer; I may enjoy much more; I may have the fulness of God!' I immediately began to plead for such fulness of God, and will never rest without it.

"I am certain all the glory belongs to them who believe. I hope we shall fully believe, and fully receive the grace of God.

"My dear Jerram, I feel for you; I would share in your bereavement. I thought when I heard, 'How

should I love to live with him a few weeks, to sympathize, to pray, and to sink into the will of God together!' I cannot tell how you will endure the absence; but I know God will help you in such a manner as shall be for his glory. He will counsel; he will give comfort; yea, 'he will be with you, he will never forsake you.' I would advise you to labour to make the sacrifice to God; labour to commit the whole to him though it be in agony. In this you will find consolation, because the will of God will be yours, his act will become yours; you will unite, and your language will be, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord! Though he slay me, I will trust in him!' May the ever blessed 'God supply all your need from the riches of his glory by Christ Jesus.' Amen!

"As you intend to journey to Hull by Leeds, on your return I wish you to call upon us: we shall be glad to see you, and drink of your cup for a season. We shall have a comfortable spare bed: and, if consistent with your business, you can tarry with us for some time. Please to say to Mr. Taylor, that I am sincerely desirous of seeing him at Nottingham; but collections, extraordinary collections, &c, &c, will, I fear, entirely prevent me. I have scarcely been a night from the circuit since I came, excepting at conference; and I never was more bound to attention than at present. Give our love to Mr. Taylor and friends. God bless you!

"Yours as ever,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER LVI.

To Mr. William Stones.

"Birstal, 1813.

"My Dear Brother,—I waited for a letter from you, and received it at length with much pleasure. I am more than ever convinced of the great advantage we receive from entire sanctification. It preserves the

soul in rest, in the midst of all the storms of life. It gives such satisfaction in every station, so much approves of the order of God, has such a proper lookout for his glory, a full deliverance from self, and such a strong desire for the good of our neighbour in every way. The world is gone, we live above, yea, we 'dwell in God, and God in us.' We can speak when we will, and be silent at our pleasure. Such victory is gained, such salvation is accomplished! We are nothing, and feel it; and we can do nothing without God; hence we give him all the praise of every good thought and action.

"'Keep yourself in the love of God.' I have known several who have received it, and some who have lost it. We need not lose it. We may stand, for God is able to keep us for ever. Live in it, talk about it, preach it, and enforce it with all patience, with all kindness; and if you do this, hell, the world, and numbers amongst the Methodists, yea some leaders, if not preachers, will in some artful way seek to hinder your success. But what are you to do in your station? 'Pray without ceasing.' Be led 'like a lamb to the slaughter; be dumb, not opening your mouth.' At the same time, never be moved, never give the least way. I have known several who were beaten from their practice. What did the late J. Brown say to me on this subject? He was handled in a strange manner, and by those who should have lifted up his hands. But there is a day of judgment! If there should be any thing extravagant in your manner, always be willing to acknowledge it; but take care that you are not unawares drawn from the LIFE, and sink into the common mass of DEATH.

"There never was a time when we preachers had greater need to tremble. And Satan's method now is, to keep us in the dark. Labour to show yourself approved as a preacher. I would labour, sometimes night and day, to have good sermons. But take care, that your end, in all your reading and study, be TO SAVE SOULS; keep this ONE END in view. There is too much

labour now TO BE POPULAR. It was said of one man at the conference, that 'he laboured for an hour to make the preachers and the people think that he knew something.' O poor labour! Are not numbers now thus labouring. I see them, and I see they do nothing. How shall such give an account to God? A man goes into a circuit with this view, 'I am determined I will make this circuit know I am somebody!' My brother Stones, the salvation of souls, and if possible, a soul brought to God in every day's labour, is of the greatest consequence. We shall be glad to see you whenever you can come. Give my love to Mr. and Mrs. Jackson.

"I am yours very affectionately,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Bramwell's labours in London—His indisposition—Letters—His removal to Newcastle—Letters.

IN the year 1814 Mr. Bramwell was appointed to labour in the London West Circuit; and from the ideas which he had previously formed concerning the gayety and dissipation of the metropolis, that appointment was to him a source of considerable and painful perplexity. Indeed his entrance on a new circuit was very generally a time of great conflict; and therefore it is natural to suppose, that when about to engage in a spiritual warfare among the rich and the great in London, his mind would be unusually affected. However, he requested his Christian friends to unite with him in earnest prayer that the Lord of hosts might accompany him and crown his labours with abundant success. As he was well known in the Methodist connexion as an active leader in revivals, there were various and conflicting opinions respecting him; in consequence of which, great numbers soon flocked to hear the new preacher. The following letter clearly exhibits his views and feelings on his entrance into this circuit.

LETTER LVII.

To Mr. Thomas Crowther.

"Chelsea, 1814.

"My Dear Brother,—I suppose you will by this time be returned from Scarbro'. I hope you have kept yourself in prayer and in the love of God. Many lose ground at the watering places; and one cause may be, some go without reason, or have no proper argument for being there. God will keep us in his own way. Nothing can harm us if we be true followers of Him. Oh that we may increase with the increase of God!

"I had a sore conflict respecting my appointment; but in my first meeting, the Lord poured out his softening Spirit. One man was so filled that he praised God aloud. I perceived at that time and since, that my coming here is of God. I have had several extraordinary seasons, and have been generally received. A number have been justified, and some awakened. I have been in all the chapels, and given many tickets. But we want Methodism, discipline, religion. The Lord, the Lord God of Israel, help and bless us in all we have to do! I am weaker than ever, and nothing less than his almighty power can support me in this place. I have found a number of children from different places, who now reside here; several of whom I had not before known. This gives me joy. What shall we meet in the great day of God?

"Our situation in Chelsea is quite to our minds—a pleasant garden, &c. Yet we have a vast population around us. The society here is small and very low. A great debt rests on the chapel, and few seats have been let. We hope to see a change. God is able. We preach only twice on the Sunday and meet the societies; and on week nights about three times; much the same as at Birstal. My regular walking to my places, &c, is about thirty miles per week. But the friends will provide me beds at some of the places. I

am quite satisfied in being here rather than at any of the other places, for several reasons. Oh what I feel when I consider the state of London! Ten hundred thousand people! Thirty thousand prostitutes! But so few of God-fearing persons! I often think of what the disciples said to our Lord: 'Behold what manner of stones, and what buildings are here! yet all shall be thrown down!' The thought of such numbers in the way to destruction, is nearly more than I can bear. Yet, with God, it is possible to bear me up. Pour out thy Spirit, O almighty God! Send us a flood from thy throne, and send it soon! Amen and Amen!

"Your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

It was not long, however, before the Lord made bare his arm, and gave his servant to see his good pleasure prosper in his hand. Some letters addressed to his friends, had we room to quote them, would show that all his previous fears concerning his new station, were soon removed, and that he was quite satisfied with his appointment.

Whilst he was thus successfully and pleasantly labouring in the Lord's vineyard, he was again called to experience great bodily affliction. From the following letters it will be seen that he had a return of his old complaint, the rheumatism, which for a short time, rendered him incapable of labour, but which could not for a moment deprive him of the consolations of religion.

LETTER LVIII.

To Mr. William Stones.

"London, January 9, 1815.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I should have written to you long ago; I have only been prevented by another severe attack of the rheumatism. I am now recovering, but the disorder has not yet left my right hand, &c, so that it is with great difficulty I now am able to write. When

I came to London, it was in an agony of prayer. I had power with God, and found universal reception. Effects were produced in every place, and in two love feasts we had a shower. Numbers were set at liberty. I never had greater love and liberty in preaching. Preachers are all in love and peace. A missionary, one who has been fifteen years abroad, supplied my place in my affliction. I have reason to believe I shall be in my work in a few days. The will of God be done! Amen! I was not able to be at our quarterly meeting, but am told, (not certain whether my information may be correct,) three hundred new members have been added this quarter. I wonder at the mercy of God!

"Though I have been in the furnace, yet I assure you that I have had such views of the glory of heaven, and the torments of the damned, that, if I have strength I shall pour out such blessings and curses as I have never done before. O that my God may be with me! I thank God that you find yourself in your place, and that the work of God is seen among you. Never lose your edge. Keep a true Sheffield blade; let it be fine, but sharp.* Never rest till you can say, 'Thy blood cleanseth my soul from all sin.' O to feel it, and then to preach it! God will be with you. Invitations are now proceeding from several towns in France. The committee are sending preachers. There was never known a greater opening. Nothing as yet from Ceylon. I wonder what these lads can do without tongues!

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LIX.

To his Daughter.

"Chelsea, January 3, 1815.

"MY DEAR ANN,—It is with difficulty that I can answer yours with my own hand, as a stiffness yet re-

* In allusion to Mr. Stones' former occupation in Sheffield.

mains in both of them. But I am quite recovered from the disease, and have walked out several days. I shall be able, through the blessing of God, to preach in Chelsea chapel on Sunday, and I hope then to proceed in the blessed work, in which I had success in London, without departing from my own way. Praise the Lord! Friends have been exceedingly kind.

"Your letter greatly refreshed us, and brought tears from us. You are not yet worn out with doing us good: you shall all have your reward. You say but little about the child: I hope he is quite well. I perceived, before I left you, that you would all have one lesson to learn, viz. to love the child, but to live every moment in the sacrifice. This the Lord has been striving to teach you. I hope you were all attentive to the voice of God, and can now say, 'Let William live or die, he is thine; do as thou wilt.' This is the glory of our dispensation,—to love all in God.

"Your affectionate father,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER LX.

To Mr. Thomas Crowther.

"Chelsea, April 11, 1815.

"My Dear Brother,—I have found it on my mind to write to you an account of my present state. I am able to go through all my work, and have been so nearly three months. My right hand remains stiff, and my fingers contracted. I am yet weak in my ankles, and extremely weary after walking a few miles. I was worn down, and extremely thin in my body, but my great difficulty now is, to prevent myself from growing too large.

"I never found greater power in preaching, and I see blessed effects under almost every sermon. I never lived in so near a union with God as at the present. I do seek to be ready every moment. The views respecting God and everlasting life, given me in my affliction,

were extraordinary. To retain a constant sense of the presence of God, is our glory in this world. It is to live in him, and always to feel it. This great salvation, —salvation from all sin; salvation into all the gospel glory, and to be changed into the same image! I am lost in wonder, love, and praise! O may we drink still deeper into these wells of salvation! You know how; —prayer, constant, private prayer. I have lately been roused from my bed in the night, to pour out my soul to God. I feel I never pray too much: it is my life, it is my all in him.

"We have had great disturbance in London; but you would read of it. I was sorry to find, by the reports from our missionaries in France, that the priests were authorized or suffered to select the Bibles which the French took with them, and to burn them; and that a great number sent to Spain, were seized and sent back. Since that, you find an astonishing change in France. How wonderful that Bonaparte is permitted to return to his place! Great events again! I pray most earnestly to God to prevent, if it please him, the great shedding of blood. 'With God this is possible.' Some of the most pious of our society, some officers and others, are called out again. The bustle is very great as a preparation for war: all hands are at work. I was preparing to go to Dunkirk, and this as privately as possible; for we had a congregation there: but this is over for the present. I am persuaded, before much can be done on the continent, the whole of the superstitious machine must be broken in pieces; and by what means the Lord knoweth. Hasten thy coming, O Lord! I remain your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LXI.

To Mr. Sigston.

"Chelsea, May 25, 1815.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Notwithstanding my long silence, I have had you and your family upon my heart

every day. I pray for you continually, that you may experience all the salvation from sin, living perfect love, do all the will of God in this world, and that your teaching may (as it has done) answer two blessed ends, that is, produce the wisdom of man, and the power of God, among your pupils. Your plan of proceeding, in this respect, will discover the fruit of your labours, in time and eternity. O how desirable to lay up a store in every way, to be ready for all the glory, to live in the fulness of God, to walk with him,—feeling the closest union, the testimony that you please him. Pray that your preaching may be effectual, have always one end in view,—SOULS, SOULS,—the salvation of your hearers! *Amen, Lord Jesus!*

"You know I have been about three months in the furnace. The mystery of God! 'I know not now!' I cannot find it out, but I know he was with me. The glory I experienced was beyond all I can now relate. I was filled with mercy. I could have shouted 'MERCY' continually. Yet I never had so clear a view of the torments of the damned. It was shown me most clearly that the terrors of the law of the Lord are not attended to in our preaching, so much as is necessary; and you may depend upon it, this is one cause of our leanness. The world must be made sick; they must feel their need of Christ. O what a view of this when in my sickness! It was also made more plain to me, that a full salvation through Christ is ever near to those who hunger. 'His blood can cleanse;' this is the song in heaven Since my sickness I have had uncommon enlargement in preaching, and never saw greater effects. We might expect thousands to be united to us, and yet we have very few comparatively. There is a great stagnation of trade; almost all persons in London upon the rack, &c, &c. I do think this proves a great hinderance to the word. The Spirit is quenched, and there is little or no prayer amongst those who get touched. I have seen some brought into liberty every week. In this my hands are borne up. I give HIM, the everlasting God, all the glory. I remain weak in

my ankles and feet, but am able to go through all my preaching and walking. I am not certain what I shall do at the conference. I shall see my way. The faculty tell me, London will not do for me in the winter, as I sweat a great deal in preaching, and have to walk home afterwards, three miles or more. Thou, O my God, wilt be my guide, even unto death. My right hand remains stiff, and I cannot write so well as I did; but perhaps you can read this.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LXII.

To his Son.

"Chelsea, June 3, 1815.

"MY DEAR JOHN,—I continue gaining strength in my ankles, &c. I wish nothing to be said at present about my staying at, or leaving Chelsea. I am so blessed among the people, that I shall feel very reluctant to leave them; and yet if, on the ground of the opinion of the faculty, I cannot stand the winter here, I shall act from duty. 'The Lord make my way plain!' This shall be my prayer.

"I remain your affectionate father,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

From the state of Mrs. Bramwell's health, as well as his own, it seemed to be the opinion of the physicians that it would not be proper for them to winter again in London. Mr. Bramwell's views and feelings on this subject, as well as on the financial state of the connexion, are clearly expressed in the following letter.

LETTER LXIII.

To Mr. Thomas Crowther.

"London, July 21, 1815.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I received your letter, and am glad to find you have done so well in the temporal

matters of your circuit. I assure you, a number of circuits not far from you are in a much worse situation; Sheffield, Halifax, Huddersfield, &c. And a number of circuits not far from London, are groaning under their weight. Hitherto the conference have got out of their difficulties, but it has been in the wrong way; we have been thrown upon the rack more and more. My prayer is, that we may be so fast this conference, that we may not be able to deliver ourselves without an entire change of system. O that this may be the case! Our collections are much too numerous, and the MONEY is more than the souls of the people. A number of preachers are of the same mind. As to the letter of promise, I know we remonstrated; and, in answer, there was an engagement to this effect,—'Do all you can, and we must make it up.' To whom that letter was directed, or what became of it, I cannot tell. I thought you took it home.

"I thank you for your care and advice. I am truly in a state of uncertainty. I must continually rest in the Lord. It being known that I have some thoughts of removing, I have petitions from every quarter, which circumstance too much affects me. But I dare not make my feelings my law for a moment. I may, if possible, see Westgate Hill on Tuesday morning next: but this depends on my procuring a supply. This place, I am told, is too warm for my wife's complaint, and that she cannot be well here. I must leave my station till I see her, or have some good ground for expectation that she might return with propriety. From present circumstances, it appears I am called to remove. The Lord be my light and salvation! As to myself, I am surprisingly strong; but I do think I am in danger of a relapse if I stay in London. To be in the cold so much after sweating in the chapels, is dangerous. I am yours affectionately,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

In consequence of Mrs. Bramwell's ill state of health, as well as from a fear that the winter might prove in-

jurious to Mr. Bramwell, the conference of 1815 stationed him in the Newcastle circuit.

About this period, many persons were plunged into great temporal difficulties, in consequence of the want of trade, and the failures of several mercantile houses of great distinction. And as "one event," in this respect, frequently "happeneth to the righteous and to the wicked," some of the Methodists who had been before very respectable, now lost the whole of their property, and experienced the truth of the declaration of Scripture, "Riches make to themselves wings and fly away." The effect which these things produced on the mind of Mr. Bramwell, will appear from the following letter.

LETTER LXIV.

To Mr. Thomas Crowther.

"Newcastle, September 14, 1815.

"My Dear Brother,—I ever call to mind the fellowship, the refreshing, the heavenly showers, the glory of God, when I was amongst you; and I shall, I believe, have cause to praise my God for ever on that account. The Lord is the same yesterday, to-day, and to eternity. The light which has shone upon this nation has, in a very general way, been rejected; and the Lord is most assuredly scourging us for our disobedience. Distress on every side! Men's hearts failing them for fear! Numbers trembling, others falling! The daily changes greatly affect me. What numbers of our friends have been upon the list lately, and there must be numbers more. Circuits are increasing in debt; they cannot maintain their preachers; they must have fewer or go to ruin. If my plan had been adopted twelve years ago, it would have prevented all this. I know it would. But here we are looking at each other, and all are fast. Continual prayer, and doing all we can for souls in these times, is the way to keep up. But my feelings when amongst distressed families, can only be borne up by the power of God.

"I may see you on my way to Sheffield; but all things are uncertain. May we every day look to God, and increase in all grace, that we may share in the everlasting glory! We have a blessed work in some parts of this circuit. The Lord be with you! Amen!

"My hand is yet contracted; I can scarce write legibly.

"Ever yours affectionately,

"Wm. Bramwell."

Although the subject of this memoir had still to endure much personal affliction, yet his desire for the salvation of men seemed to become more ardent. The following records will show the state of his mind in this respect, and his patient, yet eager waiting for the appearing of his Lord.

LETTER LXV.

To Mr. Johnson.

"Newcastle, Oct. 26, 1815.

"My Dear Brother,—It has been much upon my mind to give your family some account of our state, as I know that your good wishes for our welfare will lead you all to unite in our sorrows and our joys. It is but a little time since I received my wife at Newcastle. She was somewhat recovered when she came, but has had a severe relapse, and was brought again into an extremely weak state. Within these few days, she has had a little more strength; and may yet, through the blessing of God, be restored to her former state of health. But this is a doubtful case. 'Father! thy will be done!' We shall live together in eternal glory. I have continued in good health, only that in my right hand there remains some relics of the rheumatism. I am strong to labour, and find the blessing of God upon my little work.

"I am (I do assure you,) waiting every day for my change; and I see the heavenly throng waiting for

me. I long more than ever to be there, 'where we shall see his face, and never, never sin.' The Lord poured out his blessing in our first love meeting. Six or seven entered into liberty. I receive this from my heavenly Father, as a token for good. In our second love feast, none but the society were admitted. It was quite crowded, although held a few miles from Newcastle. At the beginning, all were quiet, and in considerable suspense for about an hour. But, in an agony of prayer, suddenly the power of God came upon us all. Conviction was general; there were cries for mercy in every direction. I never was able to preserve greater order, and yet not fewer than thirty persons were set at liberty. This work continued about two hours, and I never witnessed greater glory. I have seen a number saved the last week in different places, and I hope the work will go on; for, I do assure you, we need it at Newcastle and in the circuit. Pray, pray! and may the Lord hear you! Amen!

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LXVI.

To Mr. Turnell.

"Newcastle, 1815.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I still find a strong inducement to continue our correspondence; and this, I trust, in the name of the Lord Jesus. The frequent changes and many deaths of our dear friends, ever call upon me to use the utmost diligence to grow in grace, to be ready, fully ready to meet God. I frequently long for his coming. I wait to see him as he is, to behold his glory, to see the company, and especially the number I have known, and who are now with him. What is all the world, or worlds on worlds to compare with this? What is labour? What is suffering? What are fire and water, (supposing we were called to pass through them,) if God is with us? To see the Lamb and possess everlasting life, overbalance every thing else.

"My wife is much better, but not well. She may still increase in strength.

"We have seen a blessed work of God, but seem rather at a stand again. Yet it may break out with greater power, and I hope it will. Numbers have been saved. The glory which has been revealed in different parts of this kingdom, should make us all rejoice. 'The Lord ride on, till all be subdued!' You will find our state of finance truly deplorable. O that the time may come when no circuit shall have more preachers than they will maintain! I shall then leave you in peace.

"How are you in your own mind? Do you keep clear in entire sanctification? Do you grow? Do you pray still more and more, and with greater pleading? Are you all alive, nothing quenching, the heart all love?

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

The reader will perceive by these extracts from Mr. Bramwell's correspondence, that he was led constantly to look for his change. The happy saint was gradually ripening for glory, and his conversation was more eminently in heaven. The subjoined letter to his daughter, shows this still more plainly. He had received a secret intimation, that his earthly course might be terminated in Newcastle. In anticipation of this event, he could joyfully say, "Thy will be done."

LETTER LXVII.

To his Daughter.

"Newcastle, 1815.

"MY DEAR ANN,—It is long since we heard from you, and I suppose you will say the same respecting us. I hope you will unite in praise to God, when I tell you that I have received what I call *an extraordinary baptism of the Spirit.* I do not know that I shall preach any better, or look in any thing more like an angel:

but my soul has experienced such a fellowship with God and heavenly things, as I never felt before. O the glory which shall be revealed! I am swallowed up in him!

"When I first came to Newcastle I had, as I thought, reason to believe that I should be taken home from this place. The impression was such as made me speak of it to a few friends. In this I look up, and must say, 'Thy will be done!' May I be ready every moment!

"Three weeks ago, your mother had a serious relapse, being very ill indeed; since then she has recovered in a remarkable way. In her last sickness, by looking to God in prayer, I thought I received an evidence that she would recover from that time. So far I am correct; the Lord can heal. We are doing well in the circuit. God is with us; but we wait for a much greater shower. Now, my dear Ann, live to God. Rest in nothing short of a clean heart: plead for this several times in a day. Believe: God must cleanse according to his word.—Amen! The Lord grant it! "I am your affectionate father,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LXVIII.

To Mrs. Pickford.

"Newcastle, 1816.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—I received your letters; and the last to me were better than the first, because you point out your superior state as it respects your union with the Lord. Salvation is come to your heart indeed. 'Love casts out fear; as he is, so are you in this world.' As he is separated, so are you separated from a world of evil. This gives you boldness in looking at the day of judgment, a clear witness, a clear view of God, of heaven. O what satisfaction it yields to the soul! I am certain much is bought for us. I am equally certain all is promised to us, and that he cannot fail to

give this great salvation. He justifies, he purifies, he then stays the mind on himself; but he gathers us nearer, and still nearer, till we feel we live in the presence of God every moment. This is our place, and this is heaven upon earth. Whether poor or rich, in company or without, with our near relations or in their absence, the Lord is every thing to us, and every place is full of himself. We want no other heaven; we have all, and our God is this all. I long to see my particular friends, my relations, my brothers and sisters throughout the churches, live in this glory. Amen!

"I am certain you will in some way or other meet with tribulation; various changes will take place in this world in your family, and with yourself; (for we are not yet settled;) but you will be ready to meet every change by constant watching and prayer, and by keeping up a lively faith in God. Never expect your heavenly Father to keep his covenant only on the ground of your acts of faith. This faith must be like the pendulum of a clock,—it must be kept moving, to put the whole soul in motion. And, as your faith increases, you will more quickly mount up, run faster, labour more, love more, rejoice more, and drink the cup with greater cheerfulness. You will be more thankful for every blessing, for your station, connexions, and the instruments of your salvation. You will be more thankful for your dear, dear Mrs. Mortimer. Why did the Lord cast your lot so near her? Was it not that you might have 'fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore?' Was it not that you might arrive at all the fulness of God? O praise him for ever. I congratulate you, I rejoice with you, I triumph in union with you. I find this most sweet and pure. God is in our fellowship. It will not be broken. It is from heaven, and altogether spiritual. It will increase to eternity. I long much to feel what it will be, when separated from this vile body. I never had more pleasant walks, by faith, in the heavenly country. I see the company, and I live amongst them; for 'we are come to an innumerable company of angels; to the spirits of just men made

perfect.' The manner is inexpressible, but the thing is certain. Faith is the evidence. Farewell! The everlasting God be with you always!

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

In the following letter we have a striking proof of the sincere and faithful friend.

LETTER LXIX.

To Mr. Thomas Crowther.

"Newcastle, June, 1816.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—Notwithstanding my long silence, my soul is ever towards you. Gomersal and the circuit are near my heart. My prayer to God for you all is that you may still be saved, and above all things, prosper in your souls. I think I never felt a greater longing for the salvation of the churches, and of the world; and never so fully satisfied that it is God that 'worketh all in all.' I am giving myself to God, to receive a much deeper baptism, which I feel is my liberty in this world. I cannot rest in sins forgiven, or in being cleansed from all unrighteousness. I see the glory which belongs to me in our blessed Lord, is for himself to dwell fully in my soul. I will praise him, I do praise him. But O my little faith! I must go, I must rise, I must live with him for ever. Amen!

"My wife is much established, but not quite clear of the disease. She has occasionally slight relapses. Perhaps she will not be sound till she receives the new glorious body. May she pray always, and never faint. We are doing well, but the work is not general. All around us are in tribulation. God only knows when the general conflict will be past. God is in many places pouring out his flood of mercy even in troublous times. England has surely had a great day of heavenly visitation. It has been exalted to heaven. The Lord grant that it may not be cast down to hell! I hope the ever blessed God will continue to show you his glory. O

that the preachers, leaders, and all the societies, may be alive to God.

"I trembled for you when I heard of your mission feast, &c, &c. I much feared you would be flushed with outward appearances, and look into the feast room, and be greatly incumbered, and sink down into the cellar, with a load of worldly glory. My dear Crowther, excuse me, I thought you were proof against these things; but you and I show ourselves to be but men. The Lord save us! And may we sit together in glory!

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Bramwell's appointment to Salford—His zealous labours—Declining health—Letters.

WE now enter on the last circuit in which this faithful servant of Christ Jesus was permitted to labour. The conference appointed him to Salford in 1817. From all the accounts of those who were favoured with his presence, it appears that he was fully persuaded that his work was nearly finished, and that the time of his departure was at hand. Few Christian ministers have had more intimate communion with God, or have evinced a greater portion of self dedication, than Mr. Bramwell. His heavenly conversation and zealous exertions in the cause of his divine Master are thus described by Mr. James Grime:

"Lamenting with others the loss sustained by the removal of one so eminently useful amongst us, as the late Mr. Bramwell was, I have found my mind thrown back upon the events of the year which is past, in order to collect a few of the fragments which remain in my remembrance, of the labours of a man endeared to us by the consciousness we had of his being, like Abraham, 'the friend of God,' a man mighty in faith, strong

in prayer, enjoying constant union and communion with God. Oh! that not a look, nor a word of so great, so good a man may fall to the ground! May God make the memoir about to be published a blessing to every reader!

"At the time when Mr. Bramwell was appointed to this circuit, we had petitioned for him seventeen years; and at length we obtained our wishes. The expectation which had been formed was not disappointed. In his first address he stated the duties of ministers of the gospel, and his determination to labour after that model. 'I shall call upon you,' he said, 'not to eat, drink, or spend the time in conversation with you upon indifferent subjects, but to ask you concerning the state of your souls.'

"His method of preaching was peculiar to himself. For sometimes he made choice of very singular passages from the prophets; notwithstanding which, before he had finished, they were made very plain to the understanding. The metaphors of the inspired penmen were also applied in a remarkable manner to every individual, either as a private character, or as a member of a Christian community. Whoever remembers the following texts out of many others, will already have made the same remarks: Isa. vi, 1, 5; Isa. xliii, 1, 2; Isa. li, 9, 11; Isa. liii, 1, 2; Isa. lviii, 11, 12; Isa. lxii, 10, 12; Jer. xiv, 7, 9; Lam. iii, 31, 39.

"On one occasion Mr. Atmore said, 'None but Mr. Bramwell could have preached from such a text.' One idea generally prevailed in some mode or other, and formed the basis of almost all his discourses—that every Christian man should stand in his place, filled with the Spirit of God, and thus be qualified for the performance of every duty.

"How powerful was his call! 'Preachers! leaders! prayer leaders, and people!' and sometimes his zeal was so great that not an office of any kind escaped his notice. 'Singers and door-keepers!' resounded through the chapel. So impressive were his calls to enter into the fulness of every gospel privilege, that every head

has often been bowed down, and hundreds pricked to the heart.

"According to his own account, he seldom ascended the pulpit without strong conflicts. Perhaps his soul had been wrestling with God in mighty prayer, that the glory of the Redeemer might appear. But the nature of those conflicts he never mentioned. When, however, he had entered upon his duty, and sometimes even as soon as he entered the pulpit, his soul became unburdened; in the midst of his sermon he would obtain full liberty. Enraptured with the glories of heaven, and filled with holy fervour and zeal, he would lose sight of his presence in the body. At such seasons the Spirit's influences were shed abroad; and if there was a heart that felt not, surely that heart was hardened be wilful prejudice, or had become a willing captive to a Laodicean spirit. The inhabitants of Manchester, Salford, and Pendleton, remember many of those seasons, with a mixture of the most exalted feelings. Those of Barton will never forget the last love feast which Mr. Bramwell held amongst them, when upwards of thirty souls were set at liberty. On that occasion he informed me that for nearly two hours he did not know whether he was in the body or not. The fervour of his spirit often led him into an involuntary poetic strain, little inferior to those celebrated compositions which have given immortal honour to the name of Dr. Young. I did indeed think that he had composed some piece which described the warfare and triumph of a Christian, and that at these times he was generally quoting himself. This mode of delivery was of frequent occurrence.

"He usually met the society after preaching on a Sunday evening, when that holy fervour which he had felt during preaching was far from being evaporated. He appeared unwilling to leave his post: 'Suffer me, suffer me,' he would often repeat. During preaching also he used the same expressions, as well as 'Bear with me, O bear with me!' so importunate was he, and yet so feeling! and as often he returned to the

charge. In the midst of the closing benediction, he has frequently resumed singing with *Praise God from whom all blessings flow!* &c; when the chapel, instead of being emptied, has been filled with fresh incense. In short, if Mr. Bramwell had received at his first coming amongst us, a clear discovery of the particular time of his departure, he could not have laboured with greater earnestness. On the sabbath before he left us for conference, one of his texts was from Phil. ii, 8, 'For God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.' 'When he sees Pendleton coming up the mount of God,' according to his ardent prayer well remembered, 'and heaven's host resounds the news,' they can and will, and must bear testimony, 'how greatly he did long after them all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.'

"Whenever he met an old professor enjoying the love of God, and ready to depart, he would say, 'Well my friend, it cannot be long before you take possession of the kingdom. When you get there tell them who are already in heaven, I am following hard after you, and shall not be long.' 'I go,' said he, in one of his sermons, 'many times in a day to look over this estate of mine.' To a friend who said, *This is my birth day*, Mr. Bramwell replied, 'Well, if you live as long again wholly devoted to God, you will then become a holy man indeed.' The attainment of entire sanctification, was what he would constantly impress upon the minds of all who entered into conversation with him. Too many, he feared, are only outward court worshippers, when it is their privilege to enter into the holy of holies.

"To live dead to the world, and ever prepared for a dying hour, was his constant subject. This he would enforce by many familiar similes. 'If,' said he, 'the call should be at midnight, can you arise and at once willingly and cheerfully obey the summons? If at noonday, are you ready? Is every thing in its place? Can you obey with the same alacrity with which you would run to the door upon hearing a loud rap? Or is there something to be set in order, before the call can

be attended to?' He also observed that, if not both willing and ready in every moment of time to attend the summons of death, we were not fit to die. Preaching and conversing after this manner, his appointed time at length arrived, and as he had taught so he had learned to obey. The almighty and allwise Disposer of events was well pleased; and impressed the whole with the broad seal of divine approbation, saying, *Come up hither!* and he was suddenly from earth released.

"The week before Mr. Bramwell went to conference, he called at a friend's house in the afternoon; and, during his short stay, he prayed not less than six times, with uncommon earnestness, and in reference to some particular circumstance: whatever that might be he was enabled between the intervals of prayer to praise God with equal fervour. His knowledge of the human heart was so deep, that it has been emphatically said of him, he was truly a discerner of spirits. Many examples might be given if living well known characters were not implicated. With the pious and learned archbishop of Cambray, he knew, 'there was a simplicity which is a wonderful virtue;' of this virtue he was in full possession. He was a recollected soul. He was never absent, except when, with uplifted eyes, he looked at his estate; and this he could not avoid, even in the midst of company. He often lamented that Mr. Fletcher's letter on recollection was not more generally known. Of the reverse of this state he was accustomed to observe, that it was a dissipation of mind and of soul. He frequently said, "I feel as if I could like to go to heaven next week.'

"His familiar anecdotes and similes were made uncommon blessings. At a meeting of the society at Pendleton, he noticed many of the hinderances which prevent God from taking full possession of the soul. These he considered as idols. He gave an account of a canary fancier,—a professor of religion, but a mourner in Zion. Mr. Bramwell having seen the birds, and heard a description of their various beauties and excellencies, observed to the man, 'Why, these are your

gods!' The man was offended; but, upon serious consideration, he felt the force of the remark, cut off the heads of all the poor canaries, applied to a throne of grace, and his soul was almost immediately set at liberty. At the same meeting another bird fancier felt the force of this remark, and instantly disposed of his birds; and although he was then in perfect health, he sickened soon afterwards, and within the space of fourteen days after the meeting, died happy, triumphantly happy in the love of God."

The letters which Mr. Bramwell addressed from Manchester, to his various friends, increase in interest as he approached nearer to that country, the inhabitants of which have no need to say, "I am sick."

LETTER LXX.

To his Daughter.

"Manchester, 1817.

"My Dear Ann,—Having an opportunity of writing, by a friend, I am led to say that we are in a prosperous state. I do think your mother and myself never lived so near to God, and I hope we shall still increase in that blessed union.

* * * * * * * *

"I have you much on my mind, with your dear John. How is the work of salvation going on? Are you given to prayer? Have you confidence in God, that he can cleanse from all sin? Do you believe he is willing? Do you seek it by faith alone? Do you plead and bring it to the present time? Are you quite determined to receive it, or to perish crying out? Do you thus strive to enter in? Do you live in the daily sacrifice of yourself and children to God? O how I long for your full salvation, your living in God always, receiving all in union with Christ, your being one with him! Do let me hear in your next, (and let it be by the return of the bearer,) that the Lord is come, that

he hath cleansed your heart, that you can witness without fear, of the perfect love. O cry, cry to God mightily! Never rest till pure within. I pray daily for you. Do let me have an answer from God. Let me have my Ann and John to live in this salvation before I die! Let me see this fruit in my Ann! If you knew my concern, surely you would, even on this account, pray without ceasing, 'I will not let thee go, I will not, till my suit prevail!' From this time I will myself look up, and I will look for your answer to my satisfaction. I shall then return my God most hearty thanks for you. I will kneel down and give him glory. Our love to all in the house. The Lord bless and reward you all a hundred fold! Our love also to Dr. Taft.

"Your dear father.

"Wm. Bramwell."

The subjoined letter, to an old friend and beloved yoke-fellow, is most affecting.

LETTER LXXI.

To Mr. Roger Crane.

"Manchester, Sept. 3, 1817.

"My Dear Brother,—Since my last rheumatic attack my right hand has continued contracted, so that I find a difficulty in writing; but I am sure it is high time to answer your very affectionate letter. I can assure you, it had such an effect on my mind, that it laid me in the dust with tears. O my brother! we have passed through much tribulation, but the Lord has wonderfully preserved us from falling. I am lost in astonishment when I look to our former and past acquaintance. It is by the mighty power of God that I continue. O how near have I been at various times, how near being overcome! But an alarm has been sounded in my ears, and I have been snatched as a brand from the burning. You will unite in praises to

HIM who has preserved me in justification, in sanctification, in love, in union with my God,—living in his presence, and waiting for my change. I have had to do with all sorts of persons, with extreme afflictions, and with the face of devils; but all is love. This bears, believes, hopes, and endures: it never fails. I hunger, I thirst, I pray, and believe. Yet all is of Him, never weaker, yet never so strong. O this full salvation, this full salvation! He bought it, He promised it, He imparts it. Glory, everlasting glory be to the Lamb of God!

"Forgive me when I say to you, my life is now prayer. I feel the need of this continually, and can only live in this duty. I hope you will join me in this, though absent in body. A little while and he will come. You and I will soon have done. Let us be ready, always ready to meet our Lord. All is fixed for ever, when we leave this world. We can never alter afterwards. May this sink deep into our hearts, and may we receive a full reward!

"Yours truly,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LXXII.

To Mr. Reay.

"Manchester, Nov. 6, 1817.

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I have for some time expected a letter from you. I thought I would wait no longer, but make free to write, to inquire about all things, as I am greatly interested in the affairs of your family and circuit. We are much better in health than I expected. Indeed the Lord has been so gracious, that Mrs. Bramwell has been better than I have known for three years. Yet, she has at times some forebodings of the return of the disease; but is hitherto saved. We have a good house, and but too well furnished. The friends are too kind in this respect. I have scarcely been a night in town or

country, but I have seen effects in the societies. I determined I would never preach without meeting the society, and God has owned me in this, in every place. I have crowds to preach to, especially in Salford. I have not seen a general increase from the world: I hope I shall see it. In a love feast in the country, on Sunday week, for about two hours there was a general work of God, when about twenty, at least, were truly saved. Glory rested upon us all. In the bands at Salford, I have seen as many as seven or eight saved in a meeting. Full salvation, quite clear, is the order of the day. Praise the Lord! I do hope the work will reach the wicked; O may I see this as in former days! In entering into my own country, near my native place, you cannot conceive what a number of invitations I have had to preach anniversary sermons, and school sermons, &c, &c. As it is my confirmed opinion that the cause of God is exceedingly suffering on the ground of such visits, I have given them all up. Give my love to all the preachers, and to the members of your society.

"Your ever affectionate brother,

"Wm. Bramwell."

LETTER LXXIII.

To his Son.

"Salford, Dec. 23, 1817.

"My Dear John,—I received your kind letter, with love and praise to God our heavenly Father, that you are preserved in health, and I hope in stronger resolution to live to Him who suffered for us!—You know that we are every moment dependent upon him for all things. 'We live, and move, and have our being in him.' Yet all is of God. To be clear in pardon for all our sins,—to be pure in heart,—to live in love, this is heaven on earth. What is all the world compared with this? We are easy, which way soever we look. All is calm. Eternity only increases our happi-

ness; yea even death has lost his sting: all is joy, and the utmost delight. To live in profession is so far well. But to enjoy the kingdom,—to live in God,—to have union with him,—to bear his image,—to glorify our God,—and finish the work,—this is our grand business on earth.

"I never had so strong a desire that you may live for eternal glory. I pray for it continually. I am with you sleeping and waking. O let me be with you for ever! If you give yourself to pleading prayer, all will be done; especially if you come to God through the Mediator, all will be given you. Be importunate, and say, 'I will not let thee go.' To be great in this world is nothing; but to be great in the sight of Jehovah,—to be proclaimed in heaven as great,—to be crowned with glory and had in everlasting remembrance with God,—to unite with me in contemplating the divine perfections,—and to stand before the throne,—how glorious! O the company! the enjoyment! the duration!—I am lost in wonder and astonishment: the foretaste of that meeting enraptures my soul. I long for that situation; ALL immediately, and to all eternity. Praise him, O ye angels! ye saints of God! ye glorified!

"Yours affectionately,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

The two following extracts of letters to his son, show that he received warning of his work being nearly finished, and contemplated the termination with holy composure.

To the Same.

"Charles-street, Manchester, January 15, 1818.

"I am very well at present, but I feel infirmities coming upon me, and have serious thoughts of giving travelling the next conference."

* * * * * * * *

To the Same.

"Manchester, April 21, 1818.

"I have not made public my present state of infirmity, (I mean the asthma,) which becomes troublesome to me in every capacity. I have not made known to any person, except * * * * my intention of giving up itinerancy. If the Lord see it good, he can lay me aside. I shall know what to do. I believe he will direct me. I never had greater liberty in preaching, and never was more blessed. The will of God be done!"

LETTER LXXIV.

To Mr. Zechariah Taft.

"Manchester, April 27, 1818.

"My Dear Brother,—It has been some time on my mind to send you a friendly letter, to speak of my situation, and to request an answer. I am more than ever given to prayer, and enjoy much more friendship with my God. I feel a great desire to be in glory. To be cleansed from sin is great; but to be filled with God is much greater. O may I depend upon him for every thing, for time and for eternity! Amen, Lord Jesus!

"When I came to this circuit, I found I must carry heavy weights; and have had to carry them in much silence, and, I hope, with some patience. I want to be as the Lamb, 'dumb before the shearers.' In two love feasts, I have seen a glorious work: in each, twenty souls were brought to God. I see crowded congregations, and some hundreds have been added. As a vast number of children were taken in before I came, numbers have gone back to the world. Young persons should never be in society without a real work of grace: I hope ever to abide by this discipline.

"I again tremble for the connexion; temporals are

in a ruinous state. What can be done? All are fast again. Wales is awful.

"My wife has been dangerously ill, but is greatly recovered.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LXXV.

To Mr. Reay.

"Manchester, May 11, 1818.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have this day received your letter. It has been my expectation that you would frequently hear of us by son George. That, and my waiting to find, (if possible,) a time for coming to see you, prevented me writing sooner: this is the true cause. I am glad for the salvation you have lately experienced; you are spared to increase in the love of God. Let it be your grand business to receive a full reward. We are exceedingly liable, as preachers, to lose ourselves in outward business; I mean, in means, forms, &c, and you are liable to lose yourself in worldly business, and not to do all things with an eye to God, which will prevent the close fellowship, the heaven of loving God alone. I could write it twenty times over to you, that it is continual prayer, with strong faith, which will produce every effect. You know how many slide back in the necessary ordinances. Some by improper hearing, some by improper prayers; some, in singing; some, in teaching; many, in sacraments. The eye is taken from God, and a want of power runs through all the means. Hence we are neither cold nor hot. O my dear Reay, be alive, be a man of God, be in the Spirit, be a flame of heavenly fire. Burn, yea burn for God and for souls. I know your station; I know you will be shot at. I know every plan will be used to ruin you. Be all on your watch. Suspect every thing that does not present the meek and lowly Jesus. Have nothing but what he holds forth to you.

Receive all by Christ, and from Christ. Be satisfied in having him for your all. Be clear in full salvation, without a doubt. You will then produce deep convictions in others. I want you to live fully, to live for ever, to live in all the glory, and to be changed into it more and more. The Lord seal these things upon your heart! Amen! If I could take hold of your hand, it would be the highest gratification to me in Christ Jesus. I am receiving more love; it comes by drops after agony of prayer. My soul becomes less than ever; but God is all I want, at all times. I have been astonished at the power I have received in preaching, and at some effects. God is yet with us indeed. Give my love to your class and to the society.

"I am your affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LXXVI.

To Mr. Turnell.

"Manchester, June 12, 1818.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I waited long, expecting a letter from you; but when I received it, I was glad to hear of the goodness of God to you and yours. Salvation is from the Lord, and we will ascribe all the glory to him. He is worthy. I never was so much taken up with the Divine perfections as at the present time. To dwell in God, is our place whilst on earth; and this is perpetuated by acts of faith. Faith realizes the glory; for though we cannot see, yet we see all things in believing, make all that he is our own, and feel all the happy effects on the mind. Thus faith changes us more and more, we are taken up in the fullest union, —'hid with Christ in God,' ready, and always waiting to leave this body, 'that we may be clothed upon with our house in heaven.' Glorious company! Glorious place! I long, I wait for his coming. Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly! Amen.

"We live in Manchester, in which place we have

about six hundred members belonging to Salford circuit. I have seen numbers saved since I came. Many have received full salvation, and live in clear liberty. Many are in distress in temporal things. Wages are exceedingly low, so that numbers have little more than half meat. It is said that things will mend; for this I pray, because the sympathy is sometimes too great for flesh and blood. 'Father, thy will be done! Yet, if possible, let this cup pass from us!' My wife has had her health much better lately, and for this we will praise the Lord. Bless the Lord, O my soul! My brother Turnell, there is a dark cloud hangs over the connexion, as it respects temporal matters. Collections are become so numerous, Methodists are engaged in so many new things, that it requires great and too great exertion to accomplish our own money matters. We are all upon the rack, and religion is now too much swallowed up in other concerns. I tremble for Zion. Can we return to our simplicity? Is it possible?

"I am your very affectionate brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LXXVII.

To his Son.

"Manchester, July 2, 1818.

"MY DEAR JOHN,—Believe me, I am more concerned than ever for your eternal welfare; for I have lately been much impressed with these words, 'I am ready to be offered up, and the time for my departure is at hand.' I long to say, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.' The heavenly world is more than ever in my view. O the change, the glorious change which must then take place! I feel a considerable degree of asthma, and although I labour to keep it from public view, yet I have found it sometimes very difficult.

"Your affectionate father,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

LETTER LXXVIII.

To Mrs. Reay.

"Manchester, July 16, 1818.

"My Dear Sister,—Your frequent indisposition may have appeared mysterious, both to you and to your dear husband, as many of God's works do to us in our present state of existence; and yet we may with the utmost confidence pronounce his doings in infinite wisdom. It will be to your utmost satisfaction to continue in this view and feeling of his proceedings. I more than ever wonder at his working; but can follow every wheel with a shout of 'Glory!' Well might the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy! He has done all things well. Your salvation from indwelling evil, I hope, is complete,—your receiving the witness of the all-cleansing blood,—your being made perfect in love,—your dwelling in God and God in you. Then there is no torment, no dread of death, eternity, judgment, &c. This view makes all calm, and fills the soul with divine consolation. It is heaven, already heaven! Happy, happy spirit! thy guilt is removed and the soul is filled with God. Every thing within, without, around, above, beneath, increases the smile. What is pain? All is God, and God is all.

"I should be exceedingly glad to see you before your flight; for it may be suddenly. Your poor flesh can only bear a little, very little; but I suppose you have no objection. Well, the will of God be done! Remember where you are going. I cannot think of it without desire, without joy. O the numbers that are waiting for us! Will not the next meeting swallow up all sorrow of parting? Yea, for ever, for ever. Look up, you will shortly be crowned with immortality, with eternal life. Yet I am confident that we cannot detach any place from God's presence, from the whole. If so, his glory is here, at Carville, the same as in heaven.

And we may live in that glory here. Faith brings it in, and increases it even so much that we feel changed into it more and more. I now live in this glory more than ever, and am waiting to meet you, to receive my glorious body, that we may see face to face what we all now are only able to see by faith. The change will astonish us, will astonish all the saints in glory. We ought to do nothing in this world, but as a help to this glory; and if we esteem any thing, merely to serve the body, to the injury of the soul, we thereby prove that we prefer the body to the soul. The Lord be with you in affliction, in health, (if permitted,) in life and in death. Amen, and Amen!

"I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Bramwell's arrival at Leeds—His attendance on the business of conference—His conversation, preaching, and the circumstances of his death—His funeral.

THE writer of this memoir is indebted to a friend for the following account of Mr. Bramwell's short residence in Leeds,—a subject the recollection of which will long excite the most powerful sympathies in the minds of those who were concerned in the affecting closing scene.

"Mr. Bramwell's last journey commenced on the twenty-eighth day of July, in the year 1818. On the morning of that day, he took a place in the Manchester coach, and proceeded to the house of his affectionate friend, Mr. Sigston, of Queen-Square, Leeds, his usual place of abode whenever his duty called him to sojourn in that town, or to pass through it. His host and hostess possessed views and feelings congenial to his own, being warm admirers of his piety, and imitators of that zeal and devotedness for which he was greatly distinguished. In their society he always appeared to be at

home; and those happy, edifying interviews which many religious friends enjoyed with him in Mr. Sigston's house, will never be erased from their recollection.

"It was on the evening of the same day, that he arrived at this favourite abode. He came there for the purpose of attending on his duties in conference, which was held that year at Leeds. The series of letters presented to the reader, will have evinced the solicitude which, as a Methodist minister, he uniformly felt for the affairs of the connexion. The financial embarrassments under which the body had been labouring for some years, were lamented by him, because he thought they might in a great measure have been avoided; and they were a farther subject of grief to him, on account of their being real hinderances to the planting of the gospel in other places. Economy in expenditure, and less of worldly show and costly ornament in our places of public worship, were at once the preventives and the cures which he prescribed for this malady. But his great concern was not about outward things: he thought much and deeply about the inward declension which he feared was too perceptible in the modern race of Methodists. He longed to see the restoration of all that ancient simplicity, that genuine attachment to the Redeemer, and that unaffected charity for all men, which were the characteristics of the early professors. These circumstances, connected with the temporal and spiritual prosperity of Methodism, compelled him to a close attendance during the sittings of conference, that he might hear every thing which was suggested for the mitigation of existing evils, and that he might contribute his portion of advice, which he always gave with modesty and firmness.

"In the intervals between each of the sittings, he enjoyed himself at his friend's house in conversation that was at once exhilarating and profitable. At such moments he shone as the enlightened minister and the pleasing companion. His presence communicated both delight and edification; and it is the declaration of his host, that if Mr. Bramwell had previously received

a sure intimation that his earthly existence would terminate so soon and suddenly as it has done, he could not have conducted himself with more of that dignified propriety, and innocent cheerfulness, which become a minister of grace, and an heir of heaven. Indeed, this had always been his character, when in former times he had passed many happy days at Mr. Sigston's house: but it was the more remarkable at this period, for 'his conversation was eminently in heaven, from whence he was looking for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.' All his sayings appeared to possess a divine power. Such a mature strength of zeal, tempered with Christian affability and gentleness, has seldom been witnessed. He was 'filled with the Spirit;' and exhibited to the view of all around him a heavenly specimen of a finished character. One of his brethren, who sat near him during the whole conference, the business of which was often of a very trying description, has said that Mr. Bramwell appeared constantly to act and live under a lively conviction of these words, 'Thou, God, seest me!'

"One afternoon during the conference, he took tea with his old friend Mr. Baiston, in company with several other preachers. In the course of conversation, it was observed how difficult it was to station those preachers who had large families. Mr. Bramwell said with much solemnity, 'I think some of us ought to pray that God would be pleased soon to grant us a station in heaven!'

"A few days before he died, clasping his hands together, and lifting his eyes up to heaven, he said, 'O the blessed, blessed state of that man of God, Mr. Blagborne, when he was about to depart! I saw him in London a short time prior to his death, when he exclaimed with great joy, Glory, glory be to God, who has made me fully ready for my change!'

"A friend calling upon him one day, inquired where his station for the following year was fixed. Mr. Bramwell replied, 'My brethren have appointed me to return to Salford. But I tell them they will never have ano-

ther opportunity to give me an earthly station; for it is my intention to be in heaven before next conference. I am hastening to that better country as rapidly as I am able.'

"On another occasion, an intimate friend meeting with him in the yard of the old chapel, walked with him, and complimented him on his being chosen *chairman of the Manchester district;* adding with an air of pleasantry, 'that he hoped his elevation would not turn his head.' Mr. Bramwell smiled, and, without seeming to have heard a syllable of what had been uttered, fixed his eyes upon his friend, and said in a very emphatic tone of voice, 'O brother, live to God!' Immediately afterwards, his attention was called off by some other friends. This one object he had perpetually in sight,—to exhort every one with whom he conversed, to prepare for the complete enjoyment of the inheritance of the saints in light. He could assure all his friends from his own experience, that nothing was so delightful as to live under a constant sense of God's presence, and to do all things with a regard to his glory.

"During his stay in Leeds, he preached a few times in the neighbouring villages. On Sunday evening, August the 2d, he was at Woodhouse, and delivered an affecting discourse from Phil. i, 8–10, 'For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment: that you may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ.' Little did his friends and the congregation suppose, when they heard his animated exhortation for the 'abounding of their love in knowledge and judgment,' that it would be the last time of their being favoured with his faithful admonitions. He dilated much on 'the day of Christ,' and cried out with a fervency peculiar to himself, 'My heart's desire and prayer to God is that I may meet all my Yorkshire friends in glory!' He most affectionately entreated

believers to wrestle and strive for the attainment of the great salvation. After the conclusion of the service, a prayer meeting was held; several zealous friends engaged in prayer, and Mr. Bramwell seemed to experience a kind of ecstatic delight in that season of social worship.

Being only a few miles distant from Westgate Hill, the residence of his daughter, on Saturday, the eighth of August, he went to see her and the family, and preached in the village on Sunday afternoon, to a crowded congregation. His text was 1 John iv, 16–18, 'And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.' His sermon was very experimental, and he urged all his hearers to press into this life of God,—the dwelling in love. He spoke in a powerful manner on the 'boldness' with which a believer is inspired through Christ, 'in the day of judgment;' and in the course of his second prayer, he uttered these remarkable expressions, 'Lord, didst thou not this day speak to my heart, and say, *Thou shalt soon be with me to behold my glory?*' A great number of friends afterwards took tea with him at the house of his daughter Hargreaves. He commenced an interesting conversation with them, on the subject of prayer, in which he observed, 'The devil hates prayer; and if by any means he can prevail with us either to neglect this duty, or to be less fervent in it, he gains his purpose. Sometimes business will call off our attention, and we neglect it once in the day: at night we reflect on our folly, and lament our loss, resolving, if spared, to be more diligent on the morrow. We sometimes attend to the hours which we have set apart for the performance of this duty; but our hearts are not there, they are wandering to the ends of the earth. At other times

we are conscious of having done some evil, which causes us to be ashamed of appearing at the footstool of our heavenly Father. Thus, by one means or another, Satan obtains his desire, and afterwards reproves us for it. But when we live in a habit of constant, fervent prayer, our grand enemy flies, and our souls prosper.' Mr. Clapham, one of the company, having risen to depart very early, Mr. Bramwell inquired why he was going so soon; and being told that he had to preach at six o'clock, at Drighlington, that evening, Mr. Bramwell took him by the hand, and, looking at him as though he was never to behold him again, said, 'May the Lord bless you, my brother Clapham!'

"On Monday evening, August the 10th, he went to Holbeck, and took tea at widow Clarke's, with Dr. Taft, and Mr. and Mrs. Simpson. He had formerly shown a tender concern for the salvation of the pious widow's eldest son, and had exacted from him a solemn promise that he would endeavour to meet him in heaven. They afterwards covenanted together to pray for each other; and the youth continued to fulfil his part of the obligation till Mr. Bramwell's death, and remains to this day a steady member of society. He spent a very agreeable afternoon with the family, and the friends who had come to meet him. He prayed with them four or five times, and was very lively and zealous. Some of the friends asked him if the seven years had not expired which conference prescribes, before a preacher can be again appointed to a circuit in which he formerly travelled. 'Yes,' said the man of God, with a heavenly smile, 'but I feel as if my next appointment would be for heaven.' The same evening, at seven o'clock, he preached to an attentive and overflowing congregation, from Isaiah xliii, 1–3, 'But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not

overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.' This was the last text which Mr. Bramwell was permitted to choose, and he spoke from it as a dying man to dying men. Great unction and power attended the word. Many were encouraged to trust yet more confidently in the promise of God, who had declared he would be with them when passing through the fire, and through the water. Every person that heard him, remarked the solid grounds of comfort which in this discourse he held out to others, and entertained no doubt of his feeling their powerful influence on his own spirit, called as he was, so soon afterwards, to ascertain their sufficiency in his personal experience. He prayed with uncommon fervour at the conclusion of the sermon; and in this manner terminated at Holbeck, the last of his public labours!

"On Wednesday in the same week, after attending the last sitting of conference a short time, he left his brethren about seven o'clock in the evening, and repaired to the house of his friend, that he might complete several little arrangements for his departure on the following morning. Mr. Sigston saw him come across the yard, and says that he advanced with a firm and agile step, like a young man in the bloom of health and buoyancy of spirits.

"That evening he expected the arrival of his son John by coach, from Durham. When he had finished all his intended preparations, two young men were despatched into the town to await the arrival of the north coaches, which generally reach Leeds between nine and ten o'clock. On their return, they informed Mr. Bramwell, that his son was not arrived, but that they had met with a gentleman at the coach who had seen Mr. Bramwell, jun. the Saturday preceding, and he had not intimated to him any intention of coming to Leeds. At this Mr. Bramwell seemed somewhat disappointed, till Mr. Sigston reminded him that he had

heard him say his son would be in Leeds on Thursday evening, and that night was only Wednesday. He acknowledged that he had said this, and that Thursday was indeed the proper day for his son's arrival. He appeared much surprised at the mistake which he had made, and said, 'Dear, dear! of what have I been thinking?' His kind host then earnestly begged of him to remain a day longer; but he would not agree to do this, as he had previously promised his Salford friends that he would be with them on Thursday evening.

"During the remainder of the evening he was quite cheerful, and entered readily into conversation on various topics. Mr. William Dobson called to take leave of him. Whilst the family were at supper, Mr. Bramwell made many spiritual remarks, and regretted that he had been prevented from seeing several of his Leeds friends, for whom he had formerly felt a great regard; he particularly mentioned Messrs. Benjamin and Michael Sadler. Immediately after supper, raising one hand, and looking upwards, he said with a pleasing smile on his countenance, 'It strikes me that one of us will be gone in three or four months.' On which Mrs. Sigston observed, 'If it should be Mr. Bramwell, we should say, Who could have thought it, as he looked so well at conference?' Mr. Bramwell then said, 'Several of my friends have died of apoplexy, and I expect to go in the same way.' Mrs. Sigston replied, 'Perhaps you desire such a mode of dying, Mr. Bramwell?' He smiled, but made no reply. Mrs. Sigston rejoined, 'If such is your wish, the Lord will undoubtedly grant your request.' In a little time he prayed with the family, after which Mr. Dobson retired.

"Knowing that he intended to rise about half past two o'clock next morning, to go by the first coach to Manchester, Mr. Sigston endeavoured to prevail on him to retire; but he said he could not till he had seen Mr. Nelson: who had promised to bring him an account of the termination of business in conference, about which he seemed to be much interested. As it was then late,

Mrs. Sigston took her leave of him, and hinted that she would probably see him before he set off in the morning. But he particularly requested that she might not be disturbed at that early hour. He and Mr. Sigston, being then left alone, had much edifying conversation, at the close of which Mr. Bramwell intimated a distant intention of sitting up all night, as it was then late. To this his friendly host objected, and pleasantly remarked, 'We must have no sitting up here!' They both sat together some time longer on the sofa, till Mr. Nelson arrived, who took a little supper, and related very circumstantially to Mr. Bramwell all the final proceedings of conference. Mr. Nelson withdrew soon afterwards; and when Mr. Bramwell had conversed a few minutes with his friend, he took the bed candlestick, which had been placed for him, bade farewell most affectionately to Mr. Sigston and commended him to God with peculiar fervour. A servant sat up, who was directed to call him at half past two o'clock, and to provide him with some comfortable refreshment before his departure.

"After he had entered his chamber, Mr. Johnson, one of the teachers who slept in the opposite room, heard him praying most fervently, and, amongst other petitions, he recollects the following sentence, which was repeated several times, 'O Lord, prepare me for thy kingdom and take me to thyself!' Mr. Johnson was awakened again about two o'clock in the morning, by the fervent prayers of Mr. Bramwell, when he heard him frequently offering up this supplication, 'Lord, bless my soul and make me ready!' At half past two o'clock precisely, he came down stairs, without having been called, and took his coffee and bread and butter, with as good an appetite as usual. During the time of this early repast, he very often lifted up his hands and his eyes, and with great earnestness said, 'Praise the Lord! Glory be to God!' &c. He then said to the servant, 'We will pray a little.' They knelt down; and he prayed very fervently for himself, for her, and

for the whole family, beseeching God that she, as well as himself, might be fully ripened and made ready for heaven. After this she went to open the yard door, and he immediately followed her, shook hands with her, and said, 'The Lord bless you, Alice!' He departed; she locked the door after him, and returned into the house. This was about three o'clock; and, before she had time to undress herself, she heard some person knocking at the yard door. She opened a window, and a man said to her, 'Has a gentleman left your house this morning?' She replied, 'Yes.' The man* then said, 'I believe he is dying in the lane.' She alarmed the family, several of the members of which instantly ran down into the lane. She also ran, shrieked, and kneeling down said, 'Mr. Bramwell! Mr. Bramwell!' She thought that he attempted to speak to her; but he was not able to articulate any thing distinctly. One of the patrole ran for a surgeon; the other, assisted by Mr. Sigston and his young men, conveyed him back to the house. A surgeon arrived in a

* This person was James Ingham, one of the Leeds night patrole. He and his partner, Joseph Geldard, give the following account of this sudden catastrophe:—

"We belong to the Leeds patrole. In the execution of our duty we were going up Woodhouse-lane, a little before three o'clock. When we got to Mr. Bramwell he was standing in a bending attitude, with his hands upon his knees. I (Ingham) said, 'My good man! does something ail you?' He said, 'Yes, I am very ill indeed. Take hold of me, watch!' I immediately took hold of him on one side, and told my comrade to take hold of the other. I then asked him where he came from, and told him we would take him back again. He said, 'I came from Mr. Sigston's:' and on my asking where Mr. Sigston lived, he said, 'A little farther up, on the right hand.' I inquired of him if we might take him back again; he said, 'Yes, do if you please.' But he took only one step from the ground when he said he could go no farther. He then stood in his former position, saying he was the easiest in that posture. At last he fell upon his knees, and my partner took hold of him, and said to me, 'Be quick and tell Mr. Sigston.' Mr. Bramwell said, 'Yes, do, for I shall not be long here.' These were the last words which he spoke."

few minutes afterwards, but, alas! the vital spark was quite extinct.

"So rapid was this transition from life to death, that the language which his friend, Mr. Henry Moore, employed on the occasion, appears very just and appropriate: 'We can scarcely call it death. It almost appears a translation.' Viewed in this light, while his unexpected removal from this state of suffering is regarded as a mysterious providence by his relations, and by the church, it may be contemplated as an act of divine mercy, as it respected himself. For of the pangs of dissolution he was almost unconscious—and they were soon over.*

"It is impossible to give any adequate description of the sensation which the account of Mr. Bramwell's sudden death produced on the public mind. He had been long known and highly esteemed in Leeds and its vicinity, as an able champion in the cause of Christ; and the suddenness of his departure out of this world seemed to make every one more deeply sensible of those excellencies in his character and conduct, to which they had before done ample justice. For few preachers ever attracted larger or more attentive audiences; and, what is very remarkable, notwithstanding his uncommonly faithful admonitions, and his great plainness of speech, the ungodly part of mankind flocked to hear him in preference to a great number of his brethren in the ministry. This might be owing, in part, to the peculiar earnestness which distinguished his delivery in the pulpit, and which such persons regarded as a proof of the paramount impression produced on his own mind by the grand truths which he delivered to others.

"Many of his brethren, the preachers, had not left Leeds, the business of conference having only ended at a very late hour the preceding evening; and they testified, in every possible manner, their deep regret

* On this topic, see Mr. Dawson's very interesting sermon, preached soon after the mournful occurrence.

for the loss of such a faithful and affectionate fellow-labourer. His relatives determined to have his remains removed from Leeds, and to deposit them in the burial ground at Westgate Hill. Friday afternoon was the time privately fixed upon for the intended removal. No notice was given of it, except to the remaining preachers, who had expressed a wish to show some public mark of respect for Mr. Bramwell's memory: yet an immense multitude of serious well dressed people, of different religious denominations, had filled up a great part of Woodhouse lane, the road leading to Mr. Sigston's dwelling, some time prior to the hearse moving off with the body. As soon as it began to move from the house a procession was formed, as if from impulse, and without previous concert. The travelling preachers arranged themselves in pairs according to seniority, and followed immediately after the body. It was a very affecting spectacle to behold such a number of venerable and aged ministers, succeeded by their vigorous younger brethren, all uniting by their presence to render due honour to the virtues of the deceased. Then followed in the same order, a goodly company of the local preachers and leaders; and after them a promiscuous, but very respectable assemblage of private Christians. The number of attentive and deeply interested spectators that lined both sides of the road was immense; and before the procession had reached the top of Briggate, it had received a very considerable augmentation both of mourners and beholders, who extended from the top to nearly the middle of that fine street. Had any public intimation been given of the time when Mr. Bramwell's remains would be conveyed to Westgate Hill, the crowd would have been so great as to impede the free passage of the procession.

"In this solemn manner it moved till it arrived at the confines of Holbeck and Wortley, when after a very impressive prayer by Dr. Taft the following appropriate verse was sung:—

There all the ship's company meet,
Who sail'd with their Saviour beneath;
With shouting each other they greet,
And triumph over trouble and death:
The voyage of life 's at an end,
The mortal affliction is past:
The age that in heaven they spend,
For ever and ever shall last.

The company then separated, and the hearse conveyed the body to the place of its destination. It had been previously announced that the interment of Mr. Bramwell's remains would take place on the following Sunday.

"On Sunday, the sixteenth of August, multitudes from all parts of the country repaired to Westgate Hill, to witness the funeral ceremony of their beloved friend and pastor. Several aged people came from some of the villages beyond Sheffield, and others from places equally distant.

"Mr. Highfield preached in the area adjoining the chapel, to an overwhelming congregation, from Matthew xxiv, 44, 'Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.' The body was then committed to the silent grave, amidst the sincere lamentations of many thousands present. Immediately afterwards, Mr. Nelson and Dr. Taft delivered very solemn and appropriate addresses to the deeply affected multitude.

"This solemn event was improved, the same Sunday evening, in all the three Methodist chapels in Leeds, and in many of the adjoining circuits; and on the fourteenth of September, a funeral sermon was preached by Mr. William Dawson, in the area in front of Mr. Sigston's school, and near the place where Mr. Bramwell died. Nearly ten thousand persons were assembled that afternoon, and listened with almost breathless attention to the admirable discourse of this engaging preacher.*

* This discourse was soon after published by particular request.

"A plain tablet, bearing the following neat and unassuming inscription, has been erected to his memory in the burial ground at Westgate Hill.

HERE LIETH WHAT WAS EARTHLY
Of the venerable
WILLIAM BRAMWELL,
A chosen, approved, and valiant minister of Christ,
Who died August 13, A. D. 1818, aged 59.
Stranger! when thou approachest this shrine,
Consecrated to his memory
By an afflicted family,
May his ashes still proclaim, what he lived
To publish,
'Prepare to meet thy God.'"

CHAPTER XVI.

A remarkable dream in reference to Mr. Bramwell—Mr. Ward's brief character of him.

It was the original intention of the author of this memoir to have inserted, in this place, a comprehensive view of the late Mr. Bramwell's character. But a detailed character of Mr. Bramwell seems the less necessary in this place, because each of the friends who contributed to the preceding account, has given his own view of particular traits in it, which are correct and edifying.

It has, however, been thought proper to subjoin the following remarkable dream, which was related to the author by Mr. Henshaw, on the morning of Mr. Bramwell's decease. When Mr. Henshaw returned to his circuit, he was requested to furnish a statement of it, which he did in the following terms:

"I shall never forget the affecting scene which occurred on the morning after the last conference closed. Passing by your door a few minutes before six o'clock, from the house of my hospitable friend, Mr. W. Smith, it was announced to me that Mr. Bramwell was dead. Overwhelmed with this unexpected and most afflictive intelligence, and scarcely thinking it could possibly be

true, I entered the parlour, where I saw the body of my friend laid on the sofa, clothed as usual, with a pillow under his head,—his eyes closed, his body warm, and his features then as perfectly composed as if he had been in a sweet sleep,—only 'he breathed not.' Being left alone in the room with him for some time, I had sensations of holy delight, peculiar and indescribable. Never before did death to me so appear disarmed of terror; never did the veil which hides the blessedness of eternity from our view, seem so thin. I seemed to enjoy the sweetest fellowship with his happy spirit, and wished myself in his stead. His faithful, piercing sermons, his fervent prayers, his holy example, his heavenly converse, and the interviews of past years rushed on my recollection with uncommon force: and then I saw the career of his useful labour and of his life, thus easily and happily finished together. I saw also, by faith, the beginning of his glorious triumphant state, which should continue for ever; and if a wish would have brought him from the skies, to tabernacle again in this abode of darkness, pain, and death, I could not have offered it. As God had said to Moses, 'Get thee up into this mountain and die,' so he seemed to have said to this holy man, 'Thy work is done; leave the house of thy friend, and enter into the joy of thy Lord.' The behest was obeyed; and dropping the shreds of mortality, he entered into glory.

"His death brought to my remembrance a dream that I had above twenty years ago. I related it to you; and, it seems you then thought it so remarkable, from the reference made in it to Mr. Bramwell, as to request a written account of it. With this request I find great difficulty in complying. Dreams in general are such odd fantastic things, that they who much regard them are justly contemned. Some dreams are, however, unquestionably divine; and many others may be related to a few friends by the fireside which it would not be proper to make public. To print a dream is a serious affair; I am therefore extremely doubtful as to the propriety of the following appearing before the

public, although the beneficial effect which it had upon my own mind at the time was considerable. I submit it, however, wholly to your judgment, as I write it solely at your request.

"I told you that soon after the death of that venerable minister, Mr. Thomas Hanby, in December, 1796, I was desired by the society in Nottingham to supply his lack of service in the circuit, until the time of conference. About three months after I had commenced this arduous task, one night, in a dream, I saw Mr. Wesley enter the house where I then was, dressed exactly as I had seen him in the pulpit. I thought I at once told him of the desire which I felt to devote myself to the service of the Lord, as an itinerant preacher in his connexion. He rubbed his hands, and with great affability expressed his approbation. As I had already hurt my health by loud and violent speaking, and had received from different persons very opposite directions relative to my mode of delivery in the pulpit, it occurred to me to ask the opinion of Mr. Wesley, 'Whether or not I should endeavour to continue that earnestness of manner in preaching with which I had commenced?' He said, 'You know the clergy in general adopt a cool and deliberate method of speaking, and do but little good. We must look upon ourselves as ministers called of God, out of the ordinary way, to awaken a sleepy world to a sense of sin and danger, and earnestly to direct all men to Christ: therefore labour hard in the pulpit.' I replied, 'But inasmuch as conversion can be effected only by the operation of the Spirit of God on the hearts of the people, may we not expect that operation as much when speaking in a cool and deliberate manner, as by the use of the utmost warmth and energy of expression?' He said, 'No. The Holy Spirit co-operates with the word when it is delivered in a warm and earnest manner, and makes it effectual to conversion; as witness William Bramwell, although many take him for an enthusiast.' He then directed me to read his own journals, and bade me farewell. When I awoke it was still night; and

after musing a long time, I slept again, and thought I saw a friend, to whom I related, with great exactness, the interview which I had with Mr. Wesley in a dream, and with what benignity he had accepted of me as a preacher in his connexion. On awakening a second time, I arose and wrote down these particulars.

"Soon after this period, Mr. Bramwell came on a visit to Nottingham, where I saw him for the first time at the house of Mr. Tatham. After tea, at his request, we all prayed until the time of preaching. His text was, 1 Thess. i, 3, 'Your work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.' This sermon he preached, indeed, with great earnestness, and the Lord blessed the word. At a prayer meeting held in the chapel after preaching, several persons implored mercy aloud and some obtained it. When he retired to rest, he spent a great part of the night in prayer. The next morning he called me up before four o'clock, and we read in the New Testament and prayed till five, at which hour a prayer meeting was held in Mr. Tatham's kitchen, according to notice given on the preceding evening. The room was crowded with people; and it proved a blessed season to many. The day was spent in heavenly conversation, and prayer, with different families. In the evening he preached again; the subject was sanctification, from 1 Thess. v, 23, 24. The word was spoken with great power; and some now living will remember it to this day. On the following morning he returned to Sheffield. It may well be supposed that the recollection of the dream and the effect of this visit, would make a deep impression on my mind, and produce ever afterwards an attentive observation of Mr. Bramwell's conduct. I hope therefore I may be allowed to say, that for genuine religious zeal, a deep spirit of devotion, power with God in prayer, self denial, and deadness to the world,—for a laborious discharge of the general duties of the ministry, faithfulness in reproving sin, and sympathy with the afflicted,—for uniform and entire holiness of life and conversation, and

successful efforts in the awakening and conversion of sinners, and in the building up of believers,—I have never seen his superior. May the mantle of this Elijah fall on many young Elishas!"

The author closes this memoir with the following brief tribute to several of Mr. Bramwell's excellencies, kindly communicated by Mr. Valentine Ward, who was his colleague in two different circuits:

"My acquaintance with Mr. Bramwell commenced immediately after the conference in 1808, when he was appointed superintendent of the Liverpool circuit. After enjoying the privilege of travelling with him in that circuit, and having been separated one year, we had again the happiness of being fellow labourers and also next door neighbours.

"Nothing is more common, than for erroneous opinions to be formed of celebrated men. Accordingly, I had involuntarily formed disadvantageous prepossessions concerning our departed friend, which a short acquaintance entirely removed. In the first place, I expected to find him a snarling cynic, a morose disturber of Christian cheerfulness, and an interrupter of the most innocent conversation. But what was he in fact? The happy man,—the kind, tender-hearted friend,—attentive to every person about him,—and if more attentive to one than to another, it was to the young or to any one who were in danger of being overlooked. He was sufficiently severe to himself, but indulgent to others.

"Another particular in which I found myself mistaken concerning him, was, his conscientiously strict and firm adherence to discipline. The language of my fears, grounded on vague report, was, that however excellent he might be as a preacher, he would be very unfit to govern a large society, and that his management of discussions, and his decisions in our various official meetings, would be guided more by his own feelings, than by rule. But never was any man's conduct more opposed to such a theory. 'Thus saith the law,' was his constant observation; 'we must not, will

not go contrary to our rules.' And, I am sure, the conviction of his own mind was, that this is the most excellent way.

"No doubt, most or all of your correspondents who have travelled with him, will bear testimony to his diligence. He was a great economist of time. Rising early in the morning, he employed every hour of the day usefully, either in the duties of the closet, or in visiting the sick in body or soul; advising, comforting, or admonishing them as the occasion required. The love of immortal souls appeared to be a ruling passion in his heart. He had for years been studying the soul's immense value, its unending duration, the infinite price paid to redeem it, its capacity for enjoyment, and the danger of its being miserable for ever. And having for so long a time pondered these things in his heart, his unconstrained language concerning sinners seemed always to be, 'If by any means I may gain some.' In reference to those already in the good way, he could affirm, 'Now I live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.'

"He was not, as the words are commonly understood, a GREAT PREACHER. But if that man is the best physician who performs the most cures, that is the best preacher who is the instrument of bringing the greatest number of souls to God; and in this view Mr. Bramwell will be entitled to rank among the greatest and best of Christian ministers. Those who knew him, however, and were most competent to form a correct judgment concerning him, did not expect to hear from him what is called 'a finished discourse.' They were prepared to witness the total neglect of some modern popular rules of sermonizing. But they did expect to hear 'words of fire.' Some striking original observations occurred in all his sermons. Old truths of unspeakable value and importance, were delivered by him with an unction and an emphasis seldom equalled, and scarcely ever surpassed. Much might with propriety be said of his abhorrence of evil speaking, and of the faithful stand which he frequently made against this

too common and fashionable vice. Often when an absent character has been attacked, he has said, 'Well, we cannot mend him by talking about him here; let us pray for him.' And sometimes he has risen from his seat, and declared his determination to leave the house if this evil were persisted in.

"After all that may be said concerning his other qualities, nothing will be remembered by his numerous friends more readily, or for a longer period, than his spirit of prayer. He was indeed a man of God! His fluent, impressive, fervent, and successful addresses to God in the pulpit, the parlour, and by the side of the sick bed,—with his sweet spirit of devotion, and his deep experience of the love of God,—marked him out as one who delighted to enter into his closet, and hold sweet communion with the Father of spirits."

FINIS.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. Bramwell's birth, parentage, and education—His father's excellent instructions—Anecdote—The moral qualities of his youth—Early indisposition—His antipathy to settling in Liverpool—Bound apprentice to a currier. 7

CHAPTER II.

His convictions—His alarming distress of mind—His acts of austerity and mortification—The anguish of his spirit injures his health—He receives the sacrament for the first time—In that ordinance he obtains a sense of God's pardoning love—His great zeal for the honour of God—He associates with the church singers, and loses much of the consolation which he had felt—He becomes acquainted with a man of piety—After many conflicts, he goes to hear the Methodists, and joins the society..... 15

CHAPTER III.

The grief of Mr. Bramwell's parents when they heard that he had become a Methodist—His interview with the Rev. John Wesley—Perplexity of mind respecting his call to the ministry—He becomes the leader of a class and a local preacher—Fruits of his labours—Some account of the manner in which he received the blessing of sanctification—An extract on the same subject from the experience of the Rev. John Fletcher.. 23

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Bramwell is called to supply the place of an itinerant preacher in Liverpool—He is recalled at the earnest request of his Preston friends—He commences business on his own account—Is again solicited by Dr. Coke to become an itinerant preacher—After some consideration, he embraces the offer, and begins to travel in the Kent circuit—His manner of life, and ardent desire for the conversion of sinners—He is again brought into doubt respecting his call to the ministry—Preaches at the place where seven men were executed—Remarkable dream... 32

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Bramwell's marriage—Some misunderstanding with Mr. Wesley—By an extraordinary chain of circumstances, he is directed to labour in the Blackburn circuit—His continued diligence—The mode of educating his children—His appointment to the Colne circuit..... 38

CHAPTER VI.

His removal to the Dewsbury circuit—State of religion in that town and neighbourhood—He gives himself to prayer—The work of God begins to prosper—Ann Cutler is rendered useful in the revival—Great numbers converted—A remarkable dream—causes of his great popularity—Mr. Wesley's rules for a helper..... 46

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Bramwell's labours and success in the Birstal circuit—A great revival—Answers to prayer—Reflections on this revival..... 52

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Bramwell is stationed in the Sheffield circuit—A great revival in that town—His diligence in the work of the ministry—His acquirements and the manner in which they were applied—Reflections on the improvement of time—Anecdotes—Letters..... 73

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Bramwell's removal to the Nottingham circuit—Unsettled state of the society in that place—Great exertions to procure a place of worship—Remarkable answers to prayer—Letters—Anecdotes—His conduct as a superintendent..... 104

CHAPTER X.

He is appointed to travel in Leeds—His great popularity and usefulness—His qualifications for the ministry—Letters—Some severe trials—Begins to travel in the Wetherby circuit, and afterwards in Hull—Anecdotes—Letters..... 125

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. Bramwell's travels and success in the Sunderland circuit—His Christian moderation—Anecdotes—Letters—His appointment to the Liverpool circuit—Letters..... 146

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Bramwell's appointment a second time to Sheffield—His conduct and ministerial success—Remarkable anecdote—Letters—His second appointment to Birstal—His usefulness in that circuit—Letters..... 177

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Bramwell's labours in London—His indisposition—Letters—His removal to Newcastle—Letters..... 190

CHAPTER XIV.

Mr. Bramwell's appointment to Salford—His zealous labours—Declining health—Letters..... 212

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Bramwell's arrival at Leeds—His attendance on the business of Conference—His conversation, preaching, and the circumstances of his death—His funeral..... 227

CHAPTER XVI.

A remarkable dream in reference to Mr. Bramwell—Mr. Ward's brief character of him..... 240

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